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## 2002 Literary Review (no. 16)

Sigma Tau Delta

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A Sigma Tau Delta Publication

2002

# Literary Review

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Number 16

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May 2002



"Untitled" by Robin Judd



A Sigma Tau Delta Publication

2002  
Literary  
Review

Sixteenth Edition  
Spring 2002



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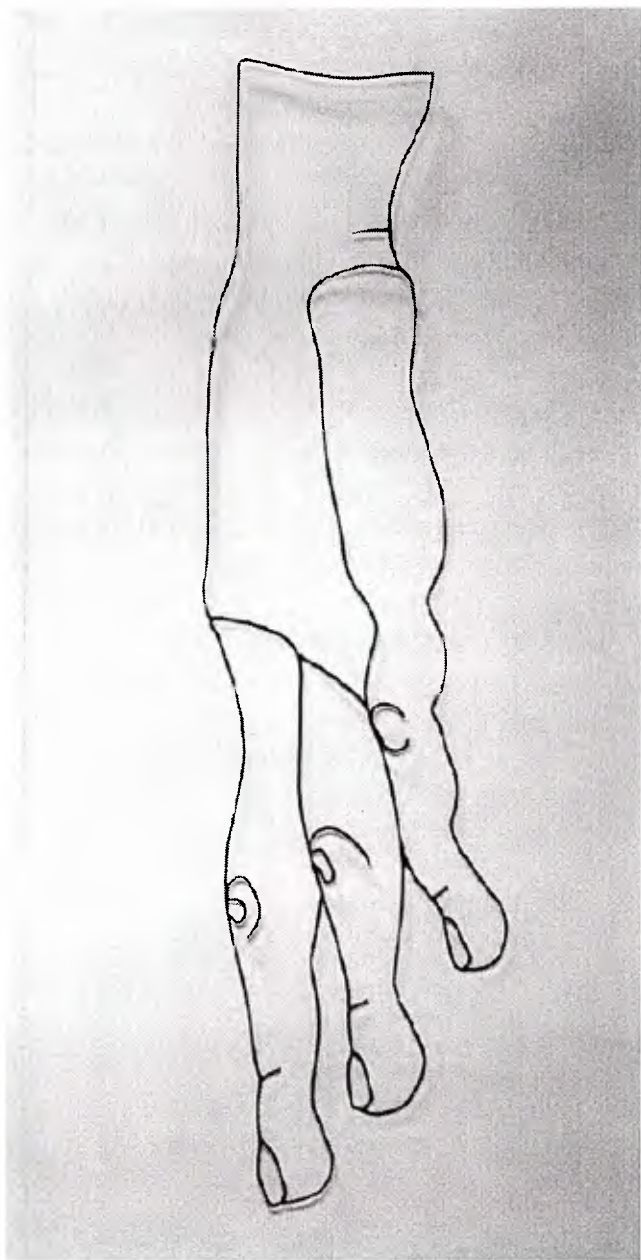
## Introduction and Acknowledgments

I am sitting in front of my computer with a copy of the last three Literary Reviews and with a stack of this year's entries, copy-edited, combed over, and most assuredly with some horrible mistake in it. And I am sitting here looking to my predecessors of editors and their witty and sometimes poignant remarks finding myself daunted by the terrible task of coming up with something pithy and original to say. For those of you looking to these pages for that insight, you will fail to find it here.

Bottom line: I am tired. It's the end of my senior year, and it's pretty much a miracle that the book you see in front of you is finished at all. So looking here, on this page, for brilliance is just the looking in the wrong place (although I highly doubt anyone looked here to that end in the first place). Regardless, let me refer you to the pages that follow: not only do we have award winning poems and stories and essays, but we also have a pretty darn good sampling of just what the Whittier College student body is capable of: insight, creativity, and the aforementioned brilliance. Enjoy, have fun, and move quickly along and away from this page.

Fondly,  
Ryan D. Fong, Editor 2002

Special thanks to: our advisor, Anne Kiley; our printer, Barry Bailey and Bailey Lithographics; and our dedicated staff and helpers, Kristine Welter (without whom this book would not exist), Meredith Wallis, Eva Sevcikova, Tim Tiernan, Katherine Wohlford, Joe Mendoza (and all the other people at the Saturday review session that I forgot to mention—sorry!).



"Hand" by Laura Parish

# Poetry

# Charlene Beal

## Kelly

She blew Saltines  
Into the air  
And they fell  
To earth as snowflakes

We ate them—  
Slowly drying our  
Mouths, and watched  
In wonder her beauty.

Carefree and laughing  
Brown hair hanging  
She smiled and  
Blew Saltines into the air.

## Portrait #1

She stands in the road  
On the divider  
Subconsciously brushing  
Back her hair,  
Though it won't do any good  
For the matted masses.

She stares at the passing cares,  
And in her eyes I see  
Vacancies and sunsets and hunger  
And lost family.

In her plaid, second hand  
Not planned, jacket  
And dirty blue jeans  
She stands.  
On the divider  
Mumbling through cracked  
Lips Broken dreams  
And hallucinogenic wanderings.



Sarah Brauer

## On my side of the Golden Gate

On my side of the Golden Gate,  
the light of San Francisco

sits across the ocean  
connected only by a rusting bucket  
clasped to land, swaying over sea  
under which I have sailed,  
hair crystallized and lips glossed with salt  
many times

Sometimes with nautical, blond-haired  
high school boys  
sometimes on small deck-boats  
watching for fluting, violet-bellied whales

Each time wide-eyed at how small  
a speck I am  
compared to  
that rusting Golden gate and the sea-lighted city.

## The pure taste of apples on my breath

The pure taste of apples on my breath  
reminds me of the harvest sun on my face,  
yellow grass,  
bees buzzing low to the ground

We are full and sprawled under an apple tree,  
like dogs, one-eyed lazy on the ground

the clouds hum by like planes  
and our cheeks have the soft, pink glow  
of air and sun

We have climbed for every apple in the orchard,  
looking for the perfect ladder, ripe for picking  
Smiling into each other as basket after basket of  
impervious apples are passed down the ladders  
to the hulky tub in the overbearing sun

In the night, we have slunk like butterflies  
from our white beds  
Navigating the trunks of tremendous trees  
clasping hands in the orchard

Until we glide on bruised apples  
cascading across the earth  
lips pearling, eyes deflecting indigo  
our bodies helplessly thwacking the yielding earth  
smudging ochre our albescent night clothes

Our purloined paradise is only ripe within certain hours  
and the ruddiness of the sky alerts us about  
impending awakeners

Hiding in the apple tub, we paralyze our restless limbs  
and muddle our laughs in the bed of apples  
as tangerine torch fires float through the orchard  
against the misty, roseate sky  
We are sottish with pleasure

But my memory will thin  
and soon the retrospection of our apple days  
will be abridged to folded shreds in the trunk of our past.

## Dorothy Burke

### daylight

light falls reluctantly  
onto the little bed in the corner,  
crème sheets on an old mattress,  
the pillow shaped to his head.  
a nightstand and dresser,  
honey colored golden oak,  
are the only other things there,  
besides her sweater on the floor  
(she left her shoes out front)  
and some of his clothes,  
folded and stacked in a corner.  
it is not quite dusk yet,  
and there are no curtains to draw.  
they begin this dance,  
slowly littering the floor  
in cotton and stone-washed denim,  
and the silver of his rings  
that cut her side time before last.  
they wish only for darkness,  
which they are not allowed,  
and for her tears to stop.  
they catch her breath,  
only five minutes to spare,  
he traces her words on her back.  
the light dimming,  
she gathers her sweater  
and smoothes the sheets.  
he transcribes  
for one last time

his poetry on her lips,  
his hand lingering on her neck.  
there is silence for only a minute,  
when she is already gone,  
and he thinks of the sound  
of words he has traced on her body  
time after time,  
and will not write again.

George Gonzalez

## A Hemingway Narrative from the Hemingway Perspective of Hemingway's Suicide

If I pull this trigger, I'll become famous. I know I will. Everyone will cry. They'll probably parade my decaying body through the streets of Barcelona and the women, oh, the little women will throw their bodies on me just so they can say they touched me. The man. The God. The animals I shot will fall from the walls with their mouths agape from the shock of the bullet. Yes, even the Cubans will cry and afterwards smoke cigars and eat shellfish all night while the women wash the tables. Naked as fish. Yes, everyone will be happy when I pull this trigger.

# Sarah Rose House

## Sister

I am not the red or smoky smell in your strawberry blond curls  
the cackle in your laughter

I am not the lack of blue in your corduroy jacket  
the voice inside your head

I am not the coldness that you felt in dad's trailer  
the resentment you have for my mother

I am not the innocent ignorant child inside of you  
the first man that you bled

I am not your cancer  
I am not your miscarriage  
I am not your prostitution

I am not the anger you have for my brother  
the 2247 Garfias Drive, Pasadena house

I am not the freckles on your back  
the marijuana countryside

I am not your absence  
the red peyote desert  
I am your sister

## Things on My Desk, October 2001

A 4"x6" color picture of me and Ryan at Matt and Maggie's wedding. He's leaning over, his sunglasses hid his eyes, my shadow hides his mouth and chin, a sideburn silently accentuates his ear. My eyes are half open. We've been partying since breakfast. My hair hides my neck. The sun is glaring hard down on us. I remember it rained that day.

A light purple flier promoting a peace rally next weekend. 'No More Victims' it proclaims. I couldn't make it to the last one because my dad asked me to work the family business. He and my step-mom had a gig playing music at a birthday party or something at a retirement home.

2 Crystal Geyser alpine spring water bottles; 1 ashtray, 6 cigarette butts; 3 keys; 1 floppy disk; A book of Neruda's love poems; an incense burner; 3 syllabi listing assignments due tomorrow.

A black and white 8"x10" of Robin, on its side. We lived together last fall when I was studying the sociology of Asian third world nations, and French literature. In the picture, she wears a bandanna to cover the hair she had, before she shaved it off last October.

2 lists of proactive things to do in peaceful witness to the opposition of going to to war. Write letters to Congress, learn about Islam. Speak with an Afghan. 'Share your personal experience of peace. Don't be discouraged.'

1 campus newspaper; 1 Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*; 1  
brochure for a poetry festival; some notebook paper;  
1 computer screen, 1 keyboard, no mouse.

1 box of green tea next to my mug my mom gave me when  
she visited some time. It has a girl in a pink shirt  
lifting weights with the words: 'Be Strong.'



Marla Johnson

## Summer Poetry

Daylight pouring through  
Shredded piles of month old  
Debris.  
Caked-dust summer heat  
Infiltrating small ant vents,  
A window screen.  
Pockets of lush green sound  
Dripping out of tune.  
Words drifting by in rippling pools.  
i am unaware.  
The darkening moon.  
Hands move across humidify paper.  
Grabbing at thoughts  
Before they are lost in Summer's vapor.

## Untitled

"a wavy dream dying to finish it all to famous misery—  
Leave immortality for another to suffer like a fool, not get  
stuck in the corner of the universe sticking morphine in  
the arm and eating meat"—Allen Ginsberg, "Last Night in  
Calcutta"

a warm vaporous breath drifting on rolling waves of  
immortality,  
atomic charcoal clouds dancing around infinity,  
laborious gasps of cackling air wash over tired paper crisp  
skin,

the Helios monster will get away from us soon,  
Luna, bull crazy, raging water, ice cube girl, will fall upon  
shadow linens  
phantoms in fantastic lively shaped clay forms of animations,  
in a few clockwise turns all the stars will be whitewashed in  
heavy chalk dust eyes, in a raw craving, a feverish thirst, to  
want it all before the big bang  
pang, settle drenched infusion of liquid meds and fashionable  
food,  
stars are spinning off the chessboard, the chalkboard sky is  
full of words, hazy smog  
eyes are being boarded up.

## Puzzle Box

Hardly can i remember  
All the shades  
Mixed into one  
Huge ultra-vibrant mass  
Of antiquity,  
But i cannot forget the first time  
i saw the world  
Conjoined in a mixture  
Of sour and acidic feelings.  
Truth burnt in umber lights.  
i wish. There might be  
A better way  
Of putting things  
Together.

Robin Judd

## Untitled

If she could speak her voice would sound raspy.  
If the treatment had taken her hair  
And spread it across the living room floor  
Her hair would be graying.

A small plastic tube plugs the  
the still healing hole in her throat  
and waves at me with every gulp she breathes.

## First Kiss

Underwear to underwear again  
i hear him panting above me—  
i feel him panting—  
i can't breathe.

The buds of my breasts press  
Against his blue  
Rubber waterbed cover.

Panting  
Gulping  
Seasick for the rocking

i see him above me  
My brother  
And I can't breathe.

## Orphan

You tapped in and out of my days—  
brown moths hitting a clean window pane.

I drowned for the silence.

I thought i'd turn blue for your absence  
tattooed with ink once berry black

faded after days and nights outside.

I thought I'd pluck the hair out of my head  
one at a time  
until my scalp turned burgundy velvet for the blood.

Forever reminded of you—  
your eyes blinking and closing at night  
your lips spreading languidly into a grin—

but you weren't waiting for me.

Joe Mendoza

## Falling Star

God lit a match across the sky.

## Driving Home from Mass

My father listens intently to the mass  
And kneels into a small ball.  
In the car, he speaks of God  
Like a passenger in the back seat.  
For that ride home, I ease into his world  
Looking at God as an old buddy  
I'll hug when I get home.  
I can still taste him on my tongue  
My breath an ancient desert breeze.  
I think of that large extended family  
Moses, the saints,  
So many people to get to know.  
Like a father smiling at his innocent child,  
I look at my father  
And hope to be young again  
Like him, someday.

## Morning

Finding you in bed with me  
Inserted into the sheets  
A fresh letter in an envelope.  
Or like a Eucharist

Placed on my tongue  
Dissolving into all corners  
Of my mouth.

### Last Kiss

Your breath moves through me  
Like a hot wind on a cold night  
Shaking withered leaves from the trees,  
Making them naked in the moonlight.  
I now know how Adam felt  
As God breathed life into him,  
Before setting him down,  
Alone on the earth.

### A Scene from Yosemite

She jumped from the cliff  
Into the lake.  
Like a penny in a pond,  
I made a wish.  
She popped up and  
Motioned me to come.  
A young fish thrown back into the sea,  
What oceans left to navigate,  
Before you'll stay with me.

### Lakewood Blvd

The war mixed people up like popcorn  
You, the New England kid  
Who knabbed a wife in Arizona

You drove down Lakewood Blvd. for miles  
Four buddies in an army jeep,  
Your impression of California  
Growing exponentially in one day  
Now, sixty years later,  
You teach your grandson how to drive  
Down this same road  
Just as scared  
Everything new  
All over again  
Me becoming you.

## Covenant

So this was the temple.  
We prayed through out pilgrim's lips  
And I left dabs of holy water on her breasts.  
Running my face down her smooth marble skin,  
The scent of incense rose.  
The tabernacle opened  
And I felt the warm glow of the divine.  
This is my body.  
This is the everlasting covenant.

Tim Tiernan

## Venus-Flytrap

First consider the nightshade family,  
their history of poisonous plants,  
then the tomato, their cousin,  
who for centuries the people refused to eat,  
now a vegetable most widely known  
in America—pressed into a condiment.

Next consider us, natives to Carolina savannas,  
now novelties touched up in the greenhouses  
of wealth & ribbon judges. A time ago we told stories  
of ancestors, the bristles of their chins trapping shut  
on swarms who came to taste our famous dew.

We have good soil now. Quality air, the finest vitamins.  
but our appetites have atrophies, our sticky tongues  
are dry xylem. When we were bog dwellers,  
our hunger drove us to cross the kingdoms.

But here they mist us sleep. We drool against glass.  
Here are some cousins of our class: saxifrage, willows,  
buttercup, pea, gentian, aster. Memorize us.

## Taking an Abandoned Hatchling to a Volunteer in Fallbrook

Gripping a cotton swab absorbed in milk,  
I try to crack its brittle beak apart,  
its bubbling, jaundiced skin like a heartbeat



twitching now and then. The down, gray wings kick  
against the giant prods and I give up  
the mothering, go inside to make the makeshift  
insulation of tepid-water Ziplock bags  
and steal a yellow cloth to lessen the heat  
in the drive. In the great heap of plastic  
I think of the tiny, flung packages of pain  
life donates daily, if the ugly thing remembers  
its brother, who fell to ants like dung,  
was the weaker of the two, and therefore  
the more delectable, its wide-eyed eyes  
casual and cool to their trampling march,  
ticklish and miniscule. We go up the I-5,  
the histories of the roadkill beside us,  
the scatter brain of nature hesitant to cross  
or not cross the slick river of our cars.  
As it lay there on the seat—no human hands  
sent them flying from their nest. But it's I  
who pokes it, tilts the vents, needs it to squirm  
and give me ten more minutes—but if it's dead?—  
The rumble of the engine shook its bed.

## Jackie O's Gloves

Gay men love my fashion, and I love pearls,  
most of all the way they begin with a kernel  
of irritation.

The couple bends over each other,  
headless, then limbless, then freeze-frame—  
rubbed between two sexy layers: a 30-inch,  
maybe a satellite hearse.

Little John salutes its slow-clinking course.

The voice of King sings a down-home politics,  
crashes his guitar into the amp and is shot  
by the sawed-off flicker of family dreams.

Hitler is rejected from the art academy,  
goes shopping. He wants to wear something soft,  
effeminate, something that will comfort him.  
In the dressing room, trying on women's panties,  
he breaks down crying, having discovered a hidden camera.

Jackie O salutes a crowd that believes  
she will restore law and order.  
That doesn't know what she'll wear tomorrow.  
Her husband on her clothes. Is it hers?  
She wore those things everywhere.  
We knew his every move.

## Kristine Welter

### Gray

An old, soaking hat hangs limp  
over the wooden fence that lines  
the graying brick sidewalk I take home,  
and unstable place I can only make  
bearable with bright pillows and a single halogen lamp.  
The metered dribble of the rain helps.

With a kiss on my belly button  
I am greeted but never quite welcomed properly.  
His touch bumps my jagged hips and wraps  
my arms across my chest.

You have paint on your pants, he says.  
Take them off.

He sticks his thumb in  
and opens me like an umbrella,  
not worrying about luck or the neighbors  
dripping down the windows.

He will not let go.

An old, soaking hat hangs limp  
over the wooden fence that lines  
the brick sidewalk I never want to take home  
so I walk through the rain and look for a new place to stay.

## The Test

Calmly resting her hand on the  
bulge at her waist, the thrust of the bus  
opens her eyes so that she must awaken through  
an oil smudge and scrawled initials to get back  
to familiar streets and porch lights.

She leans in  
to pull for the next stop, feeling  
her purse crumble toward  
the ground, and stops, waits,  
looks forward, not to the front  
of the crowded bus, but first back  
five minutes and two blue lines and then  
to where she's never been,  
where she may never be able to go.

She shrugs with the glare  
of a sturdy man bearing a maple leaf  
on his calf.

Grabbing for her belly  
again, sits back down, blinks solely, tightly cradles  
her jacket, and the bus continues  
through the intersection, as she heads for  
the border with the child her husband  
will want to keep.

## Ex-boyfriends

They've seen you naked and goose bumped,  
body strewn across their kitchen sink  
and you can't stop thinking about  
that night on the hammock,  
falling into each other and into  
the desert fugue.

They tell you things have to stop,  
there are too many years in between.  
And you wonder how  
your best friend is any different  
when they call her three days later.

They come over and stick their  
dicks in your face,  
as though offering you a plate of warm cookies,  
making you feel guilty for not  
being hungry,  
and you wonder why you didn't  
take a bite.

You call to say hello and they  
garble that the Novocain hasn't worn  
off yet. I'll call you back,  
is what it sounded like.

They read the newspaper,  
shave, shower, mow the fucking lawn,  
and then come over to tell you  
they don't care anymore. And you  
lie curled in the tub, bathing in insecurity,  
trying to scrub away one more failure.

Some don't even count and when you  
share a meal, a breath of air,  
you don't even remember them  
as significant. Just there.

They admit that there's not enough stamina, not  
enough to say on long car rides or quiet dinners and when  
you open your mailbox to find your toothbrush in a stamped  
envelope  
you mumble, yeah, I was sorta thinking the same thing.

And there is always one who should have stayed  
longer. When you say goodbye, his tears run faster  
off a quivering chin. You beg for an arm to sleep on at night  
and take a rain check on anything close to love.

And then they're gone,  
much further than a phone call or  
a plane ride, getting hairier  
by the day, their faults too obvious,  
the miles, too many.

It is easier to let go than you thought.



"Untitled" by Cynthia Nalbach

Fiction  
And  
Creative Prose



## Carebear Stare By Steve Alvarado

When I came home from work I found a Care Bear sitting on my couch, drinking a Coke, and watching TV. It was Tenderheart Bear, and his legs were stretched out on the couch. With a heart on his chest, he turned his head toward me and grunted. I stared into two iris-less ink black pupils, suspended in two big white ovals that took up nearly half his face.

His eyes narrowed. Before I could even think of running he reached out and wrapped his four-fingered hand around my wrist.

"What's the hurry?" he asked, but not in the voice he used on his show. The voice was my uncle's.

Tenderheart Bear was the only thing my uncle and I had in common. Even after we stopped talking to each other, we could still sit in the same room together and watch Professor Coldheart, M.S. (Mad Scientist) plot to hold the entire Care-a-Lot supply of mustard for ransom and thus raise enough money to buy some beach-front property in the Ukraine. I suppose it made sense that two months after my uncle died of a stroke brought on by years of untreated hypoglycemia, he would come back as Tenderheart Bear and live with his nephew.

He let go of my wrist and handed me the empty Coke can. "When did you stop drinking Pepsi?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said. "I just decided I like Coke better. I can go to the store and get you some Pepsi, if you want."

He put his hand on my shoulder and squeezed, not hard enough to cause pain, but hard enough to let me know I wasn't going anywhere. "Sit down and watch with me," he said.

I had to sit on the floor; there wasn't enough room on the couch. A cartoon was on: an enormous bipedal bear, his furry legs extended before him, sat on a couch barely wide enough and long enough to support his massive buttocks; on the floor beside him sat a little boy holding a Coke can. When I absentmindedly raised my empty Coke can to my lips, the cartoon boy on TV raised his Coke can. When I looked up at Tenderheart, the cartoon boy looked up at the bear.

"Bring me another Coke," Tenderheart said.

"Bring me another Coke," the bear on TV said.

The cartoon boy and I stood up, and he walked off-screen as I went into the kitchen, and returned on-screen when I brought Tenderheart his Coke. Neither the cartoon boy nor I had Cokes of our own. We weren't thirsty.

Tenderheart and I watched cartoons of ourselves watch cartoons of themselves until Tenderheart finally drank all of my Cokes.

His furry paw tapped the TV's ON/OFF button, then tapped the VCR's EJECT button. A cassette emerged. "Bring me that," he said.

I took out the cassette and examined its label, written in characters that may have been Greek, or Hebrew, or Arabic, or Kryptonese for all I knew.

"I didn't tell you to look at it. I told you to bring it to me." The hand reaching for the cassette could have wrapped around my head and squeezed it like a tomato. I gave him the cassette, and he set it on the couch's right armrest. "I'll put it away later," he said.

Then he clamped his left hand on my shoulder, forcing me to sit down on the floor beside him. He closed his eyes and drooped his head forward.

Within five minutes his snoring brought the woman in the neighboring apartment to my door. But her pounding failed to awaken Tenderheart, whose grip on my shoulder prevented me from reaching the door. Eventually the pounding stopped,

and the woman returned to her own apartment, but then the phone rang. And rang, and rang, and rang, and rang. And Tenderheart slept.

I was still awake the next morning. Tenderheart let me go to work. "I want you home by eight," he said. "Don't make me have to look for you." He told me to pick up some Pepsi on the way back. "And make sure it's Pepsi this time," he said. Then his paw tapped ON/OFF, then RECORD.

"You forgot to load the VCR," I said.

"Don't worry about it. Just go."

I didn't go to work. I called in sick from a payphone, then I called Robert. I couldn't talk to him; I just cried into the phone. He invited me over. When I arrived he invited me to stay overnight. I told him I had to be home by eight.

I didn't tell Robert about Tenderheart, who was still watching TV when I returned with a 12-pack of Pepsi. When I took it out of the bag he said, "Just set it over there," and nodded toward the armrest where the cassette had been.

As I climbed over his legs and placed the 12-pack on the armrest, I noticed a U-shaped tear in the carpet. Before I could examine it further, however, Tenderheart lifted me up over his legs and set me on the floor to his left.

We watched the cartoon boy and the cartoon bear watch us as Tenderheart took his first Pepsi from the 12-pack. He offered me one, but I said I wasn't thirsty.

"What else did you get?" he asked, eying the bag I still held.

"Nothing. I just bought the Pepsi."

"No you didn't. Look inside."

I reached inside the bag and brought out a bottle of white-out. I didn't remember buying the white-out. In fact, I hadn't used it in weeks, not since I had finally broken down and joined the masses and had replaced my manual typewriter with a personal computer, the day before, or the day after, my uncle died.

"May I put this away?" I asked.

He let me climb over his legs and enter my bedroom, where, in the bottom drawer of the dresser beside my bed, I found six more bottles of white-out.

I returned to the living room and the cartoon boy returned with me, climbing over the legs of his cartoon bear and sitting on the floor beside him. The cartoon bear and Tenderheart finished their first Pepsis and handed the empty cans to the cartoon boy and me. We took the cans into our kitchens, threw them away, returned to our living rooms, and sat back down beside those hairy legs that were almost as thick as our own waists.

Tenderheart tapped REWIND, and the cartoon boy bolted back up and did not run, but walked, backwards, faster than any flesh-and-blood boy could walk backwards. Back into the kitchen, to the trash can beside the dishwasher, and a Pepsi can flew up, out of the trash can, into the cartoon boy's hand. The cartoon boy rushed, backwards, back into the living room, and handed the can to the cartoon bear and sat back down. The cartoon bear lifted the can to his lips and spat Pepsi into the can and lowered it and lifted it again and again faster and faster and the cartoon boy bolted up and backstepped over the cartoon bear's legs. Rushed into his bedroom so swiftly he was a blur, and the whole screen was a blur, a shapeless, throbbing, glowing, sometimes red, now blue, now yellow, now green, now blue again, blur.

Tenderheart tapped STOP, then PLAY. Now the cartoon boy was in another boy's bedroom. The other boy had a red crewcut and green eyes and thin lips and a long, freckled face, just like Robert. The cartoon boys kissed. Cartoon-Robert asked the other boy why he had to return home by eight. He received no answer. They kissed again.

Tenderheart tapped FASTFORWARD. The cartoon boys kissed again and again, lips, necks, lower; they unbut-

toned each other's shirts and kissed shoulders and chests and nipples and bellybuttons and blurred, red, blue, yellow, green, blue.

Tenderheart tapped STOP, then PLAY.

The cartoon boy, sitting up on a bed with his knees extended and his feet tucked under his buttocks, straddled Cartoon-Robert, who lay on his back, looking up at the cartoon boy, expectantly, impatiently. The cartoon boy kept his head bent downward, his eyes tightly shut. Robert rested his right hand on the cartoon boy's left thigh, and with his left hand he stroked, and squeezed, and fondled the cartoon boy's penis. The cartoon boy's arms hung loosely at his sides as he slowly, methodically, twisted clumps of the bedsheet, let go, grasped the bedsheet, and twisted it in his hands, slowly, slowly. Robert let go of the cartoon boy's penis, and in one commaless run-on sentence said, "Something better happen pretty darned quick my hand is getting tired."

"Nothing's happening; nothing's going to happen; I'm sorry," the cartoon boy said.

FASTFORWARD, blur, PLAY. And the cartoon boy had returned to his own living room, seated beside the cartoon bear, watching me watch him.

I looked up at Tenderheart but our eyes did not meet. He drank his Pepsi and stared at the cartoon bear staring at him.

When he finally ran out of Pepsi he turned off the TV and ejected another cassette from the VCR. (Either he had put in a cassette earlier, or the VCR was somehow creating new ones and popping them out like eggs.) I brought the cassette to him and placed it on the couch's armrest, next to the empty 12-pack carton. "I'll put it away later," he said. Then he closed his eyes and drooped his head forward.

This time both his hands were in his lap, and I was free to move about. I climbed over his legs, to the other side of the couch, and found the U-shaped tear in the carpet. As I lifted the torn flap, a silverfish slithered up my arm. I brushed it off

and crushed it beneath my palm. Underneath the flap I found more cassettes, tightly packed together. I pried some of the cassettes loose, revealing another layer of cassettes beneath the first, and a third layer beneath that. I dug down to twelve layers before finally giving up. I tore away more of the carpet, revealing still more cassettes. Apparently my apartment sat upon a vast underground vault of VHS videocassettes, labeled with characters of neither Greek nor Hebrew nor Arabic nor any other alphabet formed by any human hand.

I took out two of the cassettes, climbed back over the sleeping Tenderheart legs, loaded one of the cassettes into the VCR, turned on the TV, and pressed PLAY.

The cartoon boy, in the living room of his uncle's house, sat on the couch, beside his uncle. His uncle was not an enormous cartoon bear; he was bald and pot-bellied, and was only as tall as the cartoon boy.

They must have been watching TV. I couldn't see the TV, of course, but I could hear Tenderheart – the cartoon Tenderheart, not the one sleeping near me – say, "Care Bears, STARE!"

The Care Bears then defeated Professor Coldheart and his evil henchmen. The next thing I heard was a lion's roar.

And even though it probably wasn't the first time they had seen this, the cartoon boy and his uncle laughed anyway.

I pressed STOP, then FASTFORWARD, then PLAY.

The cartoon boy, alone in his bedroom, was reading a paperback copy of *Empire Star* by Samuel R. Delany – a book I had read when I was fourteen – in which our galaxy is delivered from the schemes of Prince Nactor by the young musician Comet Jo ... or something like that. ("He had: a waist-length braid of blond hair; a body that was brown and slim like a cat's [...] grey eyes too small for his small, feral face; brass claws on his left hand with which he had killed ...")

I let the tape run another five minutes. The cartoon boy had not yet turned a single page. Either he had encountered

the most fascinating prose passage of his entire fourteen-year-old life, or, as the bulge under his zipper suggested, he chose to supplement Delany's text with certain episodes of his own imagining. He rubbed his fingertips back and forth back and forth across the book's cover. It was time to unravel that waist-length braid of blond hair.

I pressed STOP, then EJECT, and inserted the second cassette.

PLAY.

A hospital room: the cartoon boy's uncle, much older, fatter, balder, and smaller than in the previous tape, and wearing a flimsy blue gown and white sandals, sat in a blue folding chair, at a round white table near the window opposite the room's doorway. In the center of the table was a Coke can. The cartoon boy stood next to the table, opposite his uncle, and was unfolding a red chair. His uncle, staring out the window, not looking at the cartoon boy, said, "... going to kill you one of these days."

STOP.

REWIND.

I looked up at Tenderheart and whispered, "He never said that. You big shithead, he never said that."

PLAY.

I'd gone back too far. Now the cartoon boy stood before an almost ceiling-high bookshelf containing row upon row of old paperbacks: Aldriss, Anderson, Asimov, Ballard ... the science fiction section ... Bester, Boese, Butler, Campbell, Clarke, Davidson, Delany.

He pulled out a copy of *Empire Star*. It had the same cover as the copy he had been reading in the previous tape – bare-chested Comet Jo (the artist had neglected to give him nipples), holding his lynx-like six-legged pet, his "devil kitten", Di'k – and with its faded covers, creased spine, and thirty-five cent cover price, it even looked old enough to be the same copy. But it wasn't. It didn't have the creases running down

the front and back covers. It wasn't the same book he had gripped so tightly that afternoon in his bedroom in his uncle's house, thirty years ago.

STOP.

FASTFORWARD.

PLAY.

Back to the hospital room. The cartoon boy and his uncle sat opposite each other at the round white table. In the center of the table was a Coke can.

His uncle said, "No, he'd help bring it about. Peabody would want a crucifixion. He'd go back two thousand years so that he could start Christianity."

"It would be his idea?" the cartoon boy asked.

"They were all his ideas, stupid. That's what I keep telling you. The telephone, the submarine, radio, the French Revolution ... Everything. They were all his. He didn't simply help history find its 'proper course' – there is no 'proper course' – he actually started it all. In every single episode he had to lead the so-called 'inventor' by the hand step by goddamned step and show him how to build a telephone, a lightbulb, a submarine, whatever, and then show him how to use the goddamned thing. Bell, Edison, Marconi, whoever, they were all chumps, bunglers, useless. Peabody was the real inventor. That fuckin' dog and his Wayback Machine did everything. It's all his."

"But he didn't take the credit? Why not? Why did he need Edison and Marconi and all those others?"

"Who knows? Mr. Peabody works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform and all that shit."

"What about Sherman?"

"What about him?"

"What did he do, Uncle? Why did Peabody need him?"

"To rev up the Wayback Machine, I guess. Maybe they were fucking. I don't know."

Another cartoon boy, this one in a blue nurse's uniform, a



red-headed boy with a long, freckled face, entered the room. He bore a tray which held a covered dish and a pint-sized milk carton.

"Who's fucking?" he asked.

"Nobody," the cartoon uncle said. "What I said was, 'It's about fucking time my food got here.' Right?"

"Sure." The cartoon boy smiled up at the nurse, who was now setting the tray in front of the cartoon uncle. "Hi, Robert."

"Hello yourself," the nurse said, without turning away from the cartoon uncle. He uncovered the plate. "Num-NUM! Look what we have here!"

"Yeah, I'm lookin'," the cartoon uncle said.

"Creamed corn. Brown rice. Two sticks of celery. And your favorite." Next to the plate was a clear plastic package. The nurse tore open the package and removed a fork, a spoon, a knife, and a napkin. He handed the spoon to the uncle and placed the other items back on the tray.

"What's my favorite?" the cartoon uncle asked.

"De-ee-licious lactose-free milk!"

"That's my favorite? Are you sure?"

"Absolutely, sir! Apple-so-lutely!" The nurse opened the milk carton. "Num-num!"

"You said that already."

"And I'm saying it again, by golly! Num-num! Num-num-NUM-num-num! Look at them victuals! Just look at 'em!"

"I have to eat it, too, right?"

"No, you don't have to eat it."

"I don't?"

"You want to eat it, you want to eat your creamed corn. Who, sir, would not want to eat his creamed corn? Who?"

"I haven't the foggiest notion." He put down the spoon.

"Tell me, nurse ... Robert .. whoever you are ..."

"It's Robert, Uncle," the cartoon boy said.

"Whatever. Tell me, why are you always so fucking cheerful? What's there to be happy about?"

"You don't know?" the nurse asked.

"No, Robert, I don't know. If I knew, Robert, why the fuck would I be asking ..." He took in a deep breath. The cartoon boy and the cartoon nurse waited for him to finish.

"No, sorry," he finally said. "Sorry, guys, sorry. I don't know." He looked over at his nephew, then he looked back up at the nurse.

"It's easy," the nurse said. "Lesson Eleven."

"Lesson Eleven," the uncle said.

"Lesson Eleven, Paragraph Two, Axiom Seven: Once one dismisses the rest of all possible worlds ..."

Then, in a high-pitched monotone, the other cartoon boy, the uncle's son, sang:

Then one, finds this is, the best of all possible worlds!

The two boys sang together:

Once one, dismisses, the rest of all possible worlds,

Then one, finds this is, the best of all possible worlds!

"Whatever," the cartoon uncle said. He picked up the spoon and scooped up a mouthful of creamed corn.

STOP. REWIND. PLAY.

"They were all his ideas, stupid," the cartoon uncle said.

"That's what I keep telling you. The telephone, the submarine ..."

REWIND.

The cartoon boy and his uncle continued talking and talking and blurred, red, blue, yellow...

"Shit," I said, and pressed STOP.

PLAY.

The cartoon boy was in a bathroom, pointing his little penis at the viewer and pissing into an off-screen toilet.

"Okay," I said, "let's zip it up and get this over with." I pressed FASTFORWARD, just long enough to get him out of the bathroom, and then pressed

PLAY.

The bathroom led directly into the cartoon uncle's hospital

room. The uncle sat at the round white table near the window opposite the room's main doorway. He watched his son walk toward the table and then turn back around.

"Again?" the cartoon uncle moaned.

"I forgot something," the cartoon boy said.

The cartoon boy went back into the bathroom. On the sink was a Coke can. He picked up the can and returned to the hospital room, and placed the can in the center of the round white table. Then he found a folded-up red chair that was leaning against the wall, near his uncle's bed. He brought the chair to the table and began unfolding it.

The uncle, no longer looking at the cartoon boy, but simply staring out the window, or staring at the window, or staring at the light coming through the window, said, "Stuff's going to kill you one of these days. You know how much sugar there is in just one can?"

STOP.

"I'm not thirsty," I said.

EJECT.

I went into the kitchen and found a steak knife in the dishwasher. I uprooted the carpet bordering the kitchen floor, brushed away the silverfish slithering underneath, pried loose another two cassettes, and popped one in the VCR.

PLAY.

The cartoon boy and the cartoon bear, both drinking Pepsis, sat in the living room and watched TV watch them.

The phone rang. The cartoon boy remained seated. It rang three more times. From off-screen the cartoon boy's voice answered, "You've reached my machine. You know the drill." (But I didn't even have an answering machine. Not yet, anyway.)

A beep, then Robert's voice: "What in the world is wrong with you? I called your boss; he said you'd quit last week. I've been to your apartment a couple of times. I know you're in there; you haven't fixed those blinds. They don't close all the

way and I can peek under them. What's so important about that TV that you can't even go to work or answer the door or pick up the stupid phone? I know you're in there. Pick up the phone. Pick up the stupid phone ... please ... pick up ... oh God damn it ..."

"Pick up the stupid motherfucking phone!"

Another beep.

STOP. EJECT.

I played another cassette.

The cartoon boy and the cartoon bear watched TV watch them. Both held Pepsis, but during the five minutes I watched them, neither took a drink.

STOP. FASTFORWARD.

PLAY.

Another five minutes of the cartoon boy and the cartoon bear watching TV watch them and holding Pepsis they never drank.

STOP. EJECT.

I climbed over the sleeping Tenderheart legs and entered my bedroom. I took the seven bottles of white-out from the bottom drawer of the dresser beside my bed, returned to the living room, opened the first bottle, and splashed the white-out onto Tenderheart's right leg. The white-out spread up and down his entire leg and absorbed into his hide, and the leg faded, faded, faded, and disappeared. I splashed the second bottle of white-out onto the other leg, and it, too, faded, fainter and fainter, and disappeared.

The legless Tenderheart rolled off the couch and his nose hit the floor. "Christ!" he yelled.

He propped himself up with his arms and aimed his two ink-black pupils at me, two bottomless black holes that would not let me look away, and said, "About time you figured it out."

Those two dark ovals, absolutely dark ovals, pulled me in deeper and deeper, and grew, and grew, swallowing the apartment, the apartment building, the world, the rest of all

possible worlds...

Somewhere far away two hands fumbled open another bottle of white-out and splashed it onto Tenderheart's face, and his mouth, nose, ears, faded, faded, disappeared, and I was back in my apartment, opening another bottle of white-out and splashing it onto his chest. And his torso, arms, and hands disappeared, but the pupils remained—two miniature black holes suspended in my living room.

At least I could look away from them now. Part of me still didn't want to look away, but at least I could. Without the rest of Tenderheart to guide them, they didn't seem quite so big and dark and deep.

I splashed two more bottles of white-out onto them. The liquid not only passed through the pupils, leaving them unharmed, but instead of passing out the other side and staining my carpet, the white-out was absorbed into them, as if the pupils were a portal into some other world, a world inhabited by the dead of this world, who kept a meticulous video record of the living, and who spoke a language that was not Greek or Hebrew or Arabic or any other human tongue, and who sometimes returned to the living in the skins of cartoon characters, so that they could watch TV and drink Pepsi with the living.

I tossed the six empty white-out bottles into the pupils. I saved the remaining full bottle, just in case any more dead relatives should visit. Then I pulled back the U-shaped tear in the carpet, brushed away the silverfish, took out a couple of cassettes, and tossed them into the pupils.

Each cassette recorded one day of my life. 20 years, 365 days per year, 7,300 cassettes chronicling my life thus far. And what about the rest of my life, my future? Not just the future without Tenderheart, a future he anticipated ("About time you figured it out."), but the future I saw on those tapes, the one where he remains with me in my living room, watching cartoons of himself and holding a can of Pepsi from which

he will never drink, and all the other possible futures in the rest of all possible worlds? Were they, too, neatly packed below? After I destroyed my past, how many thousands, millions, more days would I have left to feed those pupils?

The phone rang. I couldn't answer it. I had my work cut out for me.

## For Eva: The Roma in Hungary

By Melissa Carvey

She stared at me, an ugly mass of scar tissue where her right eye should have been. Wondering what could have happened to leave her in such a state, I avoided eye contact with her as I had learned to do immediately upon arriving in Budapest, Hungary. I let my gaze scroll down her malnourished and decrepit body, assessing her age to be somewhere around eleven, though with the beggar children of the subways five year olds often looked as if they had already lived a lifetime. Leaning, or rather balancing, herself on her one crutch and her one leg, she held a threadbare gray hat in her hand, one or two fingers having obviously been recently lost to some act of violence. Hat outstretched, she hobbled in her dirty, nauseating stench down the center of the subway car, begging, mumbling, "*Tesek, kerem szepen*" ("Excuse me, please"): pleading more through the wounds with which her young body had been inflicted than with her eye or her voice or her expression. Indeed, her face was stone. Her face was mutilated. Her face was gypsy.

Over the course of the fifteen months I lived in Budapest, Hungary, I learned of many beggars like Eva. Working in the gypsy districts, State Girls' Orphanage taught me the sad facts of the condition of the gypsy people, not only in Hungary, but also throughout Eastern Europe. It was here I first learned of the human rights violations against the Romas.

The task of defining the identity of the Romani people is a difficult one. While the Roma are a distinctive minority, there is no Romani tribe who can claim to be the true Roma. The Encyclopedia Britannica claims that the 12,000,000 Roma are "distinguished at least by Rom blood and the Romani, or Romanes, language, whose origins began on the Indian subcontinent over one thousand years ago." It is believed

that there has been a number of migrations throughout the history of the Gypsies, leaving the Roma scattered throughout the world (Britannica).

Comparative linguists have classified the Romani language into thirteen distinct dialects. The Roma are categorized into three groups according to three of the more dominant dialects, the Domari of the Middle East and Eastern Europe (Eva's blood), the Lomarveren of Central Europe, and the Romani of Western Europe. The Romani language has no written form, and often incorporates much of the language of the country in which the speaker resides; thus a rich oral tradition maintaining the culture, traditions, and language exists (Britannica).

The culture to which Eva, our subway child, belongs is a challenge to define in general terms. Though ethnically descended from inhabitants of India, Roma (as they prefer to be called) are a diverse group, and as they scattered the world and began to call other countries their homes, parts of each host country's culture became incorporated into their own. Throughout history, the Gypsies have been a nomadic people with strong family ties, often working in occupations that allow for their itinerant lifestyle (Hancock, unknown page). Over the thousands of years, the Roma have continued to migrate, often regardless of borders. The Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as Hungary, are now home to large numbers of the Roma.

As the words fell on my ears, it seemed as if I could hear the screams of terror, hear the shouting of the attackers, feel each and every blow. I glanced up at the speaker of these horrors and saw a face. It was similar to the face of the girl, Eva, I had just encountered on the metro, but it was somehow different. This face was softer. This face was more passionate. This face was also gypsy. Maria continued to answer my questions regarding the emaciated, tattered girl I had seen. She told of skinheads, of nationalists, of peasants full of



hatred raiding the Roma ghettos throughout Hungary in the early 1990s and beating innocent pregnant women and children, torturing fathers in front of their wives and families, committing unthinkable crimes, and, worst of all, killing the innocent because of their ethnic background. Maria told me of how little Eva, then only six or seven years old was dragged from her home along with her mother, and when her mother refused to relinquish any valuables, the attackers cut off Eva's left leg with a household saw. A shudder trickled down my spine: my mind and stomach wanting this to be a fictitious, twisted story told by a sick narrator. A whisper of "No. No. No," managed to escape my clenched teeth. Tears streamed down my face. Maria then told how Eva was brought to the orphanage for medical care, and how her father later returned to take her back to the ghettos in order to care for her now motherless baby sister and four year old brother. This was a story that at the moment I did not care to hear more of, yet this was a story all too common among the children of the Roma tribes.

The climate of mutual hatred of non-Gypsies and Gypsies "was not helped by statements in August 1992 by Istvan Csurka, the vice-president of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, that blamed some of the country's difficulties on 'genetic reasons,' a statement viewed by some as "an allusion to Gypsies" (Crowe, 105). The attacks on the gypsy ghettos by nationalists and skinheads in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century are hardly a new occurrence. From the first migration from India, the Roma have faced discrimination and persecution as they have wandered into western lands. This discrimination was, and is, often based on a stereotype of the ethnic group.

Gypsies have been stereotyped as conniving, stealing, dirty, disease-ridden people. Centuries of misunderstanding and rejection have built a wall of conflict around this ethnic group. Ian Hancock stated:

Legislation in Europe against Gypsies forbade them to stop anywhere, to buy provisions, or even to draw water from the wells. Gypsies were forced to steal in order to survive, but were then blamed for it by the same people who created the situation in the first place. This kind of obligatory theft is called "subsistence stealing," and can be accounted for in a rational way. But it has nevertheless led to the widespread stereotype of the Gypsy as thief among non-Gypsies, who interpret the situation according to their own cultural standards (Unknown, p. 5).

It is this sort of cycle that has kept the Gypsy people in poverty, in slums; this cycle has reinforced the stereotype, and for some justified discrimination. I, myself, have been witness to dozens of crimes (mainly theft) committed solely by impoverished Gypsies. I, myself, remember moving from one side of a tram to another for fear of being mugged or robbed by boarding Roma who appeared suspicious. I learned this cautiousness within a month or two of my move to Budapest, but for many, a hatred (not mere cautiousness) for this people is deeply rooted, tracing back to centuries of segregation and ethnic conflict. The violence committed at the hands of the Gypsies is a direct result of centuries of this tension. Unfortunately, many of the stereotypes of the criminal Roma, are statistically accurate, thus propelling the segregation and continued persecution.

"But what happened to her eye and her fingers, Maria? The fingers looked like they were freshly amputated," I asked, afraid of the answer, yet driven to ask. The response turned my stomach and moved my silent tears to sobs, and my whispered "no's" to silence. I heard Maria's words as if in

a horrible nightmare. She told of Eva's insufficient production of coins from begging; she told of her hiding for days with no food to avoid the inevitable abuse from her father. She told of a father hunting down his 7-year-old daughter who had been missing for days, only to pluck her eye out with his pocket-knife. She told of this happening over and over again, Eva always hiding, sometimes escaping with only a body of bruises, other times losing an extremity or maybe two. While the abuse was reported to the state by neighbors and others, nothing was done. Pain was etched across the face of my companion, "Melissa," she exclaimed, her voice full of grief, "They stand by and do nothing. The rendoseg [police] have stood and watched it happen, and do nothing." I sat, speechless looking for words: not wanting words, just feeling. Watching Maria's face, I saw the discrimination and abuse of centuries; I saw her people; I saw reality.

In the months following our talk, I discovered that reports like Maria's of state and police non-intervention, and often police participation, were very common. The "1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the U.S. Department of State on February 25, 2000 reported that

The [Hungarian] Government generally respected the human rights of its citizens, and the human rights situation improved during the year; however, problems remained in some areas. There was one possible extrajudicial killing by police, and police on occasion beat and abuse Roma . . . Abuse of children and discrimination against the disabled are problems. Roma faced societal discrimination, and the police sometimes failed to provide adequate protection against attacks on them by skinheads or to investi-

gate such cases vigorously. Skinhead attacks on Roma increased during the year (taken from [www.state.gov /www/ global/ human\\_rights/1999\\_hrp\\_report/italy. html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/italy.html)).

Thus arises an issue of a most complicated nature. While government legislation (influenced heavily by the policies and resolutions of the United Nations) in countries where the Roma have experienced much persecution generally prohibits such discrimination, implementation of those policies is far from efficient. The report continues on to say,

Although the Government generally respects human rights and civil liberties of its citizens, the authorities do not ensure due process in all cases . . . Although senior levels of the Interior Ministry and the national Police were more willing to address problems, police continued to use excessive force against suspects. Police harassed and abused both Roma and foreign nationals.

(taken from [www.state.gov /www /global/ human\\_rights/1999\\_hrp\\_report/italy. html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1999_hrp_report/italy.html)).

The government did initiate criminal proceedings against several racially motivated police attacks, but the problem has become so widespread, that prosecution of each aggressive act is nearly impossible, and officials are hesitant and unmotivated to pursue. David Crowe claims that in 1994 "in addition to intensified crackdowns on racial extremists, Hungarian authorities had also been working since independence [from the Soviet Union] to strengthen minority rights for all groups ... The constitution now insured full protection for these groups ... On July 7, 1993 the Hungarian parliament passed a new Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, which

specifically mentioned the Roma: " This law "outlawed every form of discrimination against minorities." Crowe, however, also reports that while the new law set up a structure under which to prosecute offenders, Zsolt Csalog of the Raoul Wallenberg Society claims that the law "would not go far enough to protect gypsies [gypsies] who often find police unwilling to investigate crimes against them" (104-106). Because of the failure of the government to implement the law, the authorities are condoning and contributing to the continuation of discrimination against Romanies.

In September of 2000, members of the European Council penned a resolution signed by ten members and presented by Mr. Tabajdi of Hungary. Though the motion had not been discussed in the Assembly, it committed the members who signed it. The thirteen points address mostly issues of "improvement of living and social conditions of the Roma/ Gypsy population in order to decrease possible Romani migration from countries of central and Eastern Europe" (Council of Europe, Doc. 8830). While the resolution/motion raises valid issues, it too fails to give practical implementation concepts. Instead, issues of "rapidly growing discrimination, even racial intolerance against the weakest of society" as well as "extremely poor housing and health conditions" were allocated as unacceptable. Documents such as these provide the small stepping-stones to grander change: recognition of these issues is the first step to realizing change.

Looking into the teary eyes of Maria, I saw the reality of her gypsy world: a harsh, brutal world full of inequality, injustice and impoverishment; it was a world of violence and fear. Maria's candor and openness about the pain she felt for her people stabbed at my heart as I rose from my chair. Looking down at the pattern of reds and greens woven throughout the rug, groping for words I turned to her, eyes downcast. Somehow the words, "I'm so sorry" spilled out in my heavy American accent: the red and green becoming

blurred to my puffy, tired, teary eyes. As I walked the streets in tumult that afternoon, I took in each person I passed: Magyar and Roma alike. I saw through skin, through bone structure, through social constructs. I imagined myself in their world; I imagined my life under different circumstances; I imagined the terror.

## Dust

By Katherine Wohlford

Her picture is in a plastic shield, laying in the bottom of my desk. The pale blue ribbon hanging on the wall has dust on it. I remember somebody saying once that dust is made up of 80% human skin. I guess that is what dust is; lost touches and last embraces. Today marks the 1,448th day since our last embrace.

I remember that morning more clearly than any other. It was the end of March in the middle of Illinois. I stood in my pajamas and a t-shirt. My feet were bare on the cold cement. The dewdrops on the grass were clear. It was just before 6 a.m. The sun had risen with a timid grace. Beauty was not right now. Nothing should be beautiful when something even more beautiful was dead.

I knew something was wrong the moment our roommate came running down the hallway. She screamed for everyone to come out of their rooms. She needed to know who was there. There were 18 of us girls living on that floor together. It was just after two o'clock in the morning. I had only been in bed for a few minutes. Chaos has never been so clear. I had barely made it out of my room when the police arrived. They ordered everyone to separate. We were all questioned. No one would say why. The only explanation we were given was that someone was hurt.

That night we had decided to have a wild night out. The group of us girls had gone to a fraternity party and danced until our feet were numb and our backs soaked with sweat. We walked from one party to the next, laughing at the dancing spectacle we had put on. Just a few hours before the sun would begin to rise we had decided to meet a few more friends. I had been tired, tired from the dancing, the boys and the beer. I decided to walk home. I left my roommate with a bunch of friends, wished everyone a good night and headed home. I

expected her to return to our room sometime before dawn. I would find out from the dean a few hours later that my beautiful roommate, my dance partner that night, was dead.

"Bludgeoned" was the word they used in the papers. "Massive Head Injuries" were the cause of death. Her blood was spilled down the mailroom steps. Another student was to blame. It was only a matter of hours before he was arrested and the bloody clothes were found in the trunk of his car. The remaining piece of the bludgeoning brick lay underneath the driver's seat. He had been caught on the surveillance video of a gas station a few blocks away. He left footprints marked with her blood on the bathroom floor.

I stood on the cold cement for three hours that morning. I did not move. I just looked. The warmth of the rising day hastened the dewdrops to melt from their frozen state. The sun filtered through a solitary drop on a single green blade. A dewdrop hung swollen and sagging as the heat forced the wetness to expand. They say time holds still during moments of tragedy. Time was not held still. Time was held through the birth and death of a single drop of dew.

I called my mother when it was late enough that I would not wake her. Early morning phone calls always alarmed her. I made our conversation short. Words were not easy. I told her that I was safe, but that Andrea had been killed last night. I didn't want her to worry when she saw the news that morning that a college student at our small private school had been murdered. I hung up the phone. I wanted to weep, but could not. I did not know that you could be too sad to cry. I did not sleep, did not eat. I could only sit and stare.

Her parents arrived at noon. I hugged them in silence. Our tears were too deep to come. She had only been dead a few hours and they were already moving her things from the room. The new light blue sweater she had wanted to wear that night was still laying folded on her bed. She had wanted to save it for a special occasion and instead had decided to wear an older



shirt. Her mother gave me her teddy bear to hold. At the time I didn't want the bear. Now I wish I would have kept it and maybe looked for a little dust.

I left two days later to attend a funeral in her hometown. The coffin had to be left closed. She was too badly beaten. Her high school senior picture was set on top of the coffin. I remember kneeling in front of the coffin, praying to closed ears. The voices around me were distanced by the perfectly varnished shine of the wooden coffin. I remember wishing everyone would just leave for one second so that I could open up the cover and see if she was really there. How could I even begin to miss her or cry for her if I couldn't see that she was really dead. Whispers told me that only her parents and her sister were allowed to see her body. Everyone had always commented on how much Andrea looked like her sister. When the funeral director opened the coffin, her sister fainted. When she woke she said that she didn't recognize the body of her sister lying in the casket. I drove the four hours home that night in a borrowed car. Snow began to fall while I traveled the last 50 miles. I wondered if snow was falling on the freshly disturbed dirt of her grave. I thought of how cold it probably was in graveyard.

Months later I would find an old roll of film underneath the now empty bed. Curiosity caused me to send it for development. I picked up the newly developed pictures and slowly tore away the sealing tape. The first picture was of Andrea and I the night she had died. We had taken a picture of ourselves just before we left that night. We had dressed up and wanted to capture our moment of beauty. Who knew how beautiful that picture would become.

I stayed on that campus, in that room for another year. Everyday I passed the mailroom. Sometimes in the middle of the night I would go and sit on those stairs. I would search the walls for just one speck of blood to make me believe that it was real. I would wipe my fingers in the crevices between the bricks looking for just one piece of her dust. There was no blood,

there was no dust, but I could still feel her. I could feel her terror. The police said she had almost made it to the door before the last hit on the back of the head. Her bloody fingerprints were on the handle.

It's four years later and sometimes I still see her in a crowd. Not one day in four years has passed without her name and face in my head. Light blue ribbons grace the trees of my old campus every 29<sup>th</sup> day of March. The flower garden we planted is still there with a black stone holding her engraved name. Someday I will go back and sit on the steps of the mailroom stairs. I will run my aged finger along the top railing, searching for a little piece of dust. I will glance at our old room, where we carved our names on the closet door.

I imagine that this March, amidst the warmth of coming spring, dewdrops will swell and sag on the flowers I planted for her. Her name will forever be engraved on that door and in my head; on a dusty photograph in my bottom desk drawer, and on the black stone in the garden. And with these fleeting words on this flimsy paper I have offered her one last gesture of honor and one final engraving.



"Disguise" by Jure Gavran

# Imitaciounes of Chaucer

Melissa Carvey

## Chaucer's Madonna

A lady ther was of greete renoun;  
All knewn her wel in everich toun.  
Ful wel belived and famous was she,  
She was Madonna, the celebrytee.  
She was best at the art of the daunce;  
Of sex she hade lerned not by chaunce:  
Large nombres of wightes hadde felte her touche,  
For not just men had she had on her couche.  
When axed by press and fans of devocioun,  
She woud answer with proude disposicioun:  
"What rekketh me, though folk seye vileynye,  
Just enjoy myn songes and melodye!  
My famous lif is my own privetee.  
Why speken of myn non-virginittee?  
Tell me eeke, to what conclucion,  
Were members maad of generacion?"  
Not one worde, nothing more woud the saye,  
But instead the woud go on her weye.  
Her actyng kareer, her twain fail'd marriage,  
The had brought her on this longe pilgrimage.  
And for sex, for love, for rock and for rol  
For musik, and daunce, but not for her sol.

Ryan D. Fong

## The Grayt Kinge of Konge

Than folowyng, walked a kyngly ape,  
Ycleped Konge, a beest of geaunt shape,  
Who hail'd from grene and distant soote wodes,  
Swich was the hom of beestes, wilde as bores,  
Ther nas noote a beeste or man mor heyerie  
Herys blake as nyght, alle thike and wyerie.  
His hondes were as wide as a barne doore,  
His feet as large as that sam barnes floore.  
And tho, by tytle he was of first estate  
Of lower kynde, he was abounden by fate,  
As animal, whil mightie in fors and deed  
Lacked intellect he, as men adrunken on mead,  
For we herd tales of bylding yclept Empyre State,  
And a mayden, Fay Wray, his oones desyred mate.  
Fryghtful thes tales, swich wase the rampage;  
Perhaps it was hes resoun for pilgrimage.  
For he took som yelouw fruyte to sacrifice  
A yifte to the martir he wened wolde suffice  
For wich to yif hem strength, to be the best,  
By holy blessing to take on hes quest  
To smyte hes foen—the beesten of Japan:  
Godzeela, Geedra, Mothra and Rodan.  
For with his stroong musselen and Beckett's grace  
No yvel nolde ataken his royall place.  
Our gentle hoste no bed wolde he afinde,  
Unus'd to guesten of the simian kinde,  
So while the Kyng of Konge did asleep,  
Our hoste yaf hem a pellow for wich to keepe—  
A large ooke tree, on which heis grayt head fell  
Then he woke us all withe not so gentyl a yell.

## Gregory Garabedian

### A John Shaft Ther Was, and that a Worthy Man

Whan the knight began to tellen his tale  
(O, a storie verray longe withouten ale!)  
He tole hem of werre and love with ese,  
But the storie of the knight did nought please;  
The wommen were waimenting his compaignye:  
This boringe knight, with his rule of chivalrye.  
Sodeinly, there walked a man full vertuous  
He possessed badassedness so plentevous.  
The pilgrimes sayeth aloud, "who is this man?"  
And thanne a vois unwist, lik God, bigan:  
"Who is the blacke private dicke  
That is the sexe-machine to alle the chickes?"  
And thanne the pilgrimes, "Shaft!" they saide.  
It filled everich one and alle with drede;  
The pilgrims ne knewe from whence the word came  
But they knewen it was his name, just the same.  
Then the knight stente his tale longe  
For this Shaftes presence was too stronge.  
To the Wyf of Bathe he was a fantasye;  
Soothe to tellen, she liked Shaftes companye.  
In love he looketh lik an auctoritee;  
Could this housband nombre syxe be?  
Qoud she, " Wolde you lyketh to make payement  
With what I see is your well-endowed instrument?"  
"No way, babie!" is what Shaft he did seye  
Which certainly meanth, "I have no lust to playe!"  
I seye, he is a complicated man,  
None understandeth him but his womman.  
I trowe eke this Shaft seketh for she

That can yiven him full felicitee.

Now with the pilgrimes, Shaft he gan to dwelle  
And now I saye, ther nis namore to telle.

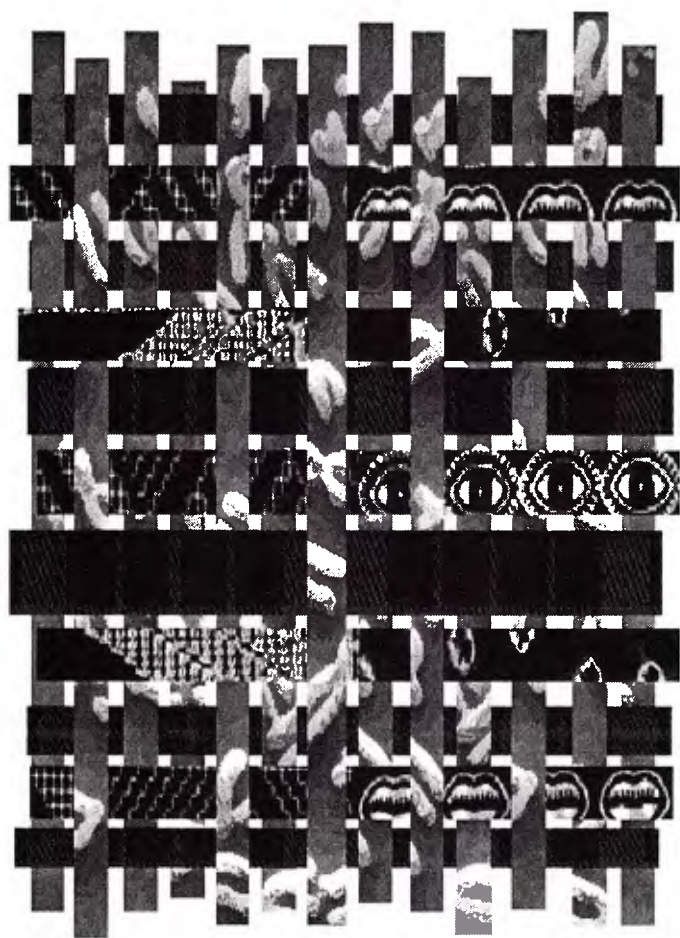


## K'Leigh Thomas

### Michael Jacksone

A man of aungels was among the blynd  
And def humans of this relm so earthlie.  
Longe was his harre and blak in hewe,  
Byg were his eyen and bruner than sand.  
Talle of bones he was though smalle in brawn,  
But yeers of daunceinge made his brawn cut.  
He was cleped Michael Jacksone,  
But was knouen best as MJ to everichone.  
The yifte of vois and musike were his  
To commaund, but those nere not his only yifte.  
The syght had he to see what  
Others nold nor coude not - that  
Beyng the payn of ynnocent children;  
The children whose lyves were ful of syn  
That was not caused by hire own hands  
But by those who had lost many hor glassen sands.  
Ev'n tho he had faced trubuils of his owen,  
He styl had love to yeve - never to lon.  
The endlesse sclandre from the mediae never  
Coude be able to halt this mannes endeavor  
To proue to the children of the world that  
They were loved incondicionel and that was that.  
On his artificiel fowle wold he go  
To the children of the world to sho  
Them this love - like Seint Nikolas wolde.  
Yiftes he wolde yeve hem, as many as he coude.  
Thruh countless hospitale hals he wolde walk  
And to the yong ones ther he wolde talk.  
Wyth just a few words he wolde bryng a smyle  
To many yong faces which han not seen on in a wile.

His continuende werke with the yong ones  
And his love for a nacions doughters and sons  
Ne han not only holp them kep ther sanite  
But han made him the guardyan of all humanite.  
Like the Angel Gabriel, tymeless, trewe,  
Michael's endless love and caring wil continuit,  
And ryes wil he alwey abov the lyes  
To answer the little ones ynnocent cryes.



"Synthetic/Eugenic" by Ryan D. Fong

# Analytical Writing

(Fore) Knowing Theodicy:  
The Problem of Omniscience  
By Erin Clark

In his invocation to the Muse in Book One of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton states his objective in creating his great epic is an attempt to “assert Eternal Providence/And justifie the wayes of God to men” (Flannagan 355). *Paradise Lost* grapples with the extent to which God is responsible for the pain, anguish, child molestation, drug overdoses, war, rape and general agony that exist in the post-Edenic world we presently inhabit. While Milton’s is probably as successful as any attempt to resolve the mysteries of God’s actions toward humans, I will argue that due to the unresolved problem of omniscience, *Paradise Lost* fails to completely prove that God is all good, and thus cannot fully justify the ways of God to men.

Dennis Danielson writes that in framing his project in terms of justifying God’s justice, Milton “announces that he will attempt a *theodicy*, a defence of God’s justice” (144). In crafting his defense, Milton’s project in *Paradise Lost* is to resolve the following seemingly irresolvable assertions:

- 1) God is omnipotent;
- 2) God is all good;
- 3) Evil exists in the world that God has created.

It is possible to assert any two of these propositions; however, the third proposition will then unerringly cease to make sense. If God is all powerful and all good, how can evil exist? But surely evil does exist, and if so, how can God be both all powerful and all good? To drop either of the first two assertions greatly troubles the fundamentals of Christian theology; it troubled Milton, too. *Paradise Lost* can be read as Milton’s response to this problem, and takes the form of the free will defense.

First, let us frame the Fall in terms of the problem of

theodicy. Milton sees Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve as an act of evil, so we must retain the third proposition. Milton maintains that God is omnipotent (he is frequently referred to as the "Almighty God"), and also that he is all good. We see God's goodness most concretely expressed in God the Son (who is the only form of God that we actually see at all). God the Son is described as "most glorious, in him all this Father shon / Substantially express'd, and in his face / Divine compassion visibly appeard, / Love without end, and without measure Grace" (Flannagan 420) – clearly, there is no suggestion that any malice lurks within God the Son.

In Book Three, God foresees Satan's successful corruption of Adam and Eve. God the Father and God the Son discuss the relationship between the former's foreknowledge of the Fall and the responsibility of the newly fallen for their actions; here, God the Father articulates Milton's free will defense:

They [Adam and Eve] as to right belongd,  
So were created, nor can justly accuse  
Thir maker, or thir making, or thir Fate,  
As if predestination over-rul'd  
Thir will, dispos'd by absolute Decree  
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed  
Thir own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,  
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,  
Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown.  
(Flannagan 419)

The key phrase here is "thir will." God the Father states that he has endowed all his creatures with the capacity to think and the capacity to make choices; once they are created, he no longer exerts direct control over the decisions of his creatures. This endowment of free will does not preclude his omnipotence, because the limitation is self-set.

God could have created creatures over whom he exercised constant and ultimate power, creatures that make no choices, and in effect, have no free will. Danielson writes: "God's choosing to make creatures with that potential for going wrong is consistent with his being both all powerful and wholly good" (149). Only by creating humans as "authors unto themselves in all" (Flannagan 419) are humans capable of truly loving God; the ability to rationally exercise our free will allows for obedience out of love (choice), not merely love out of obedience.

Milton thus maintains God's goodness and omnipotence without making molehills out of mountains, or dismissing evil as merely a greater good that we do not understand – evil is surely evil, and Satan epitomizes it in *Paradise Lost*. But evil, for Milton, does not spring from God. It springs from poor choices, freely made and freely executed, on the part of Adam, Eve, Satan, and other independent and empowered actors. Even Satan acknowledges his own culpability in his fate in terms of free will. In Book IV, he asks himself, "Hadst thou the same free Will and Power to stand? /Thou hadst: whom hast thou then or what to accuse, /But Heav'n's free Love dealt equally to all?" (Flannagan 443). Free will allows space for God's creatures to own their sins rather than blame God for their follies.

Having considered how Milton has addressed the problem of omnipotence via the free will defense, let us turn now to the question of omniscience, or God's state as an all knowing being. Omniscience and omnipotence are often assumed to go hand in hand; the former is often conceptually subsumed into the latter. Milton, however, understood these to be two separate traits that God possesses. (Conceptually separating omnipotence and omniscience allows us to entertain the notion that God may be one and not the other.) In *The Christian Doctrine*, Milton writes, "Under the head of the intelligence of God must be classed his omniscience ...

So extensive is the prescience of God that knows beforehand the thoughts and actions of free agents as yet unborn, and many ages before those thoughts or actions have their origin" (Milton 55-57). He further cites Psalms 147.5: "His understanding is infinite" (Milton 55). Given Milton's definitions, we can understand omniscience in two ways. First, omniscience may consist of extensive foresight regarding the actions of free creatures. Second, omniscience may be absolute infinite vision across all time and space. (This is not necessarily implicit in the first, although the two views are not mutually exclusive.)

Let us, for the moment, assume the second definition of omniscience. The argument that God's foreknowledge of Eve's eating the apple from the tree of knowledge does not cause her to do so is possible given the free will defense. God knew that Eve would freely choose to eat, and she did so with no interference from God. (If anything, he sent the angel Raphael to try to thwart it.) However, this argument cannot be applied to God's response to Eve's (and then Adam's) actions. Milton's God is not only a passive observer of human history, but also an actor within it – indeed, he walks through the Garden of Eden shortly after the Fall, and doles out punishments to Eve, Adam and the serpent that have literally seismic impact on his creation through the end of time. If God has foreknowledge of all human history, and his decisions are an integral part of that history, then God possesses foreknowledge of his own actions throughout all time – not just human action.

An infinitely omniscient God would have foreseen the Fall prior to creating Adam and Eve, and would have foreseen their redemption through Christ – and all of the torture, disease, violence, nuclear catastrophe and otherwise general unpleasantness that transpires in between. And yet he created humans anyway, knowing what his own response to the Fall would be – a response that opens the door for all of



these cataclysmic events to occur. God is not solely responsible for Adam and Eve's disobedience, but he is solely responsible for kicking them out of the garden and directly into the line of thousands of years worth of fire as punishment.

By this same token, God is also responsible for granting grace to Adam, Eve and their progeny through his acceptance of the sacrifice of God the Son. We must remember, however, that while we watch God the Son go through a genuine process of soul searching in Book III that results in his decision to die on behalf of humanity, if God the Father is omniscient in the infinite sense, then he would have foreseen this conversation, foreseen God the Son's sacrifice, and foreseen his own acceptance of that sacrifice. If God knew that fallen humanity would find grace through Christ when he created all, does that mean he thus felt that the goodness that would come through Christ's life outweighed the suffering that would come from the fall? Perhaps humanity can achieve even greater perfection after receiving salvation through Christ?

This is the argument of the fortunate fall, and it is one that Milton considers via Adam in Book XII:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
That all this good of evil shall produce,  
And evil turn to good; more wonderful  
Then that which by creation first brought forth  
Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,  
Whether I should repent me now of sin  
By mee done and occasiond, or rejoyce  
Much more, that much more good thereof shall  
spring,  
To God more glory, more good will to Men  
From God, and over wrauth grace shall abound.  
(Flannagan 704)

Furthermore, then archangel Michael suggests that Adam and Eve will “not be loath / To leave this Paradise, but shalt posses / A paradise within thee happier farr” (Flannagan 708). Adam’s joy at learning of humanity’s redemption through Christ seems to imply that perhaps he finds the loss of Paradise a small price to pay for such a glorious salvation; Michael seems to suggest this as well. And yet, Raphael’s earlier visit with Adam and Eve suggests that Michael and the other angels would have been just as happy had Adam and Eve stood, as the angels stood.

When Raphael parts from Adam in Book Eight, he leaves on these words: “I in thy persevering shall rejoyce, / And all the Blest: stand fast; to stand or fall/Free in thy in own Arbitrement it lies. / Perfect within, no outward aid require; / And all temptation to transgress repel” (Flannagan 581). Clearly, Raphael implies that the angels and people were created sufficient to stand so that they could and would. While the angels may rejoice in the salvation of humanity through Christ, Milton suggests that they would have rejoiced just as heartily had there been no Fall. Michael’s insistence that there will be a greater Eden within does not necessarily mean that the cost of the Fall is worth the loss. This may be the best of all possible worlds given the Fall, but that does not mean that this is the best of all possible worlds – Milton surely has grave doubts as to whether such is the case.

Raphael’s description of Adam and Eve as creatures sufficient to stand raises again God’s role in their Fall. Even if God himself were not a responsible actor in Adam and Eve’s eviction from Eden, his culpability in their fall may be traced all the way back to the precise moment of the creation of all things. If God is both omniscient and omnipotent, then he would have foreseen, at the instant in which he created all things, that Satan would create Sin, and that Adam and Eve and all humanity would fall, and that all of the resultant atrocities committed and experienced by humans would come

to pass; yet he created what he knew would come to be this world anyway. God, infinitely seeing the pain that would become of his creation, and possessing the absolute power to have created something else, chose to create this world, wracked as it was to become with evil, with "not-good."

Perhaps we ought to consider the origin of evil itself, using Satan as a case study. In Book VII, when God creates Earth, he states, "I am who fill/Infinitude" (Flannagan 542) and "what I will is Fate" (Flannagan 543). Flannagan notes that "'I am' is the shortened version of one of the names of God ... 'I am that I am'" (542). God asserts that all things, all beings, are of God; God is all things. Angels and humans are made of the same stuff, and that is the stuff of God. Satan, too, is made of the stuff of God. Satan, who spontaneously and organically creates Sin; Satan, the one creature who truly falls self-tempted, self-deceived; Satan is nothing more than a piece of God that has been let free, endowed with will, reason and the blessing of the Divine. And then he commits the first act of incest. And then he tells the first lie. And then he starts the first war.

God acknowledges the originality of Satan and the rebel angels' sins as that which prevents them from receiving grace: "The first sort by thir own suggestion fell, / Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd / By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace, / The other none" (Flannagan 420). I would argue further that even the rebel angels fell deceived by Satan, and that Satan is in fact the only character in whom evil springs with no external pressure. While we can acknowledge that once Satan (then Lucifer) was created, God could not violate his will or force him to do anything (and thus is not solely at fault for Satan's sins), we must seriously question the inherent goodness of one who can create a figure with such potential for evil – particularly if we assume that God created Satan knowing in the moment of creation exactly what Satan would do for all time.

The relationship between omniscience and omnipotence then is left unclear in *Paradise Lost*. It seems possible that one precedes the other. Perhaps God was omnipotent at the moment of creation, and created, and only once it was done could foresee what would happen across time. This implies the more limited form of omniscience; God could have created Lucifer/Satan only to immediately after realize what he had done. However, because he is all good, he loved Lucifer/Satan despite his inevitable fall, and because he gave Lucifer/Satan free will, he did not act to avert his rebellion. Conversely, perhaps it is God's very omniscience that traps him – because he foresees all of history, his own actions included, perhaps he is caught in his own script, reciting his pre-determined lines, truly incapable of doing anything other than what he fated himself to do at the moment of creation. The final possibility seems to be that God possesses the capacity and the willingness to create that which he knows will involve evil without reservation, and hence is not all good.

It seems we are faced with a new dilemma, a set of four irresolvable propositions rather than the original three:

- 1) God is omnipotent;
- 2) God is omniscient;
- 3) God is all good;
- 4) Evil is.

Any three of the four can coexist. God can know all and be good, and have no power to stop evil. Similarly, God can know all and have power over all, and be all good, and simply not find what we call evil to be problematic. Even the original three propositions can coexist: God can be all powerful and all good, and have created a world where evil exists *if he did not foresee the emergence of evil* until the immediate moment after he finished creating all – that is to say, if he is not omniscient in the infinite sense of the word, but his omniscience kicked in once creation was made, and he could turn his prescient eye upon it. This latter assertion is one that

Milton does not support in *The Christian Doctrine*.

It seems that if we insist upon God's omnipotence and omniscience, and we recognize evil as evil, then God simply cannot be all good. Perhaps this does not mean that his ways are unjustified, or even unjust. It merely means that he, too, is culpable for what we are living in. "Too" is important here, for God's lack of total goodness does not negate free will, nor does his owning partial responsibility for the post-Edenic reality get rid of human responsibility. Eve chose to eat the apple whether God wittingly created her knowing she would or not. God is not responsible for human or angelic decisions in *Paradise Lost*. However, it seems he may be responsible for creating the circumstances and characters that make those decisions possible. God has not pulled the trigger on any guns, but he has provided both the capacity and the inclination to fire them ourselves. He is responsible for his own response to human and angelic decisions, for casting the angels into hell and casting humanity into... this. Grace does not erase, negate or lessen the torture in between the fall and redemption.

"All Things Proceed, and Up to Him Return"  
*Paradise Lost*, Dominion, and Ecological Liberty  
By Ryan D. Fong

When I first saw Gustave Doré's visual representation of "Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill / Satan hath journey'd on, pensive and slow" (IV, 172-173), I gasped. Not only was the wood engraving richly detailed and evocatively rendered, but it also conjured up an image in my mind's eye of a painting which looked strikingly similar: Albert Durand's *Kindred Spirits*. The visual landscape is stunning in both pieces. In *Kindred Spirits*, the abundant vegetation of the forest almost seems to glow, as the painting is bathed in a golden haze, with birds and brooks off in the distance. Likewise, in Doré's illustration, the vastness of Paradise is portrayed by the sea of lush tree-tops that make up the canopy of the Garden of Eden, which sunlight and shafts of light that stream upward from the horizon crown. However, at the center of both paintings are intruders. For Durand, two men stand on a cliff looking out with paper in hand—suggesting that the land is ready for "use." Similarly, for Doré, Satan sits perched atop Mt. Niphates, envious of God's creation and plotting its corruption and destruction.

When I look at this pair of images, it is impossible for me *not* to imagine a whole other set of possibilities than what eventually occurred in both of these locales. Sadly living in a post-lapsarian state and in a post-expansionist state, this natural terrain no longer exists in the ways depicted by Durand or Doré. As for Eden, we have been expelled; as for the state of rural America, we have all but leveled it and covered it with concrete. And some critics (J. Martin Evans most significantly and prominently) have claimed that Milton is to blame for such a reality—that *Paradise Lost* articulates an imperial ethic and call to conquest. Indeed, other critics

(Diane Kelsey McColley in this case) argue that Milton does the opposite—providing a more green and anti-imperial sensibility. For me, the significant question is how much Milton warns against these potentials of imperial and, for this essay, ecological conquest—and whether he provides a more just, ecological perspective and possibility. In my readings of *Paradise Lost*, I see this possibility.

While Milton must certainly deal with the problematic language constructed in the Bible of “dominion” and “empire,” a more complete reading of *Paradise Lost* as a whole (as McColley argues) and in particular through the lens of Milton’s political prose points to a healthier and more green-friendly perspective—a perspective which understands the deep interconnectedness of all creation, which advocates an ethic of care and responsibility, and which recognizes the difference between a leader (or pair of leaders) who has been given dominion and an exploitive tyrant who mistakes license for a morally conscious liberty.

Certainly, when considering issues of dominion within the Edenic context, the commands and words of God in Genesis must be considered very carefully. While the Biblical version of the Creation and the Fall place the famous, “Be fruitful and multiply” dictum fairly early in the story, Milton waits until Book VII, in his own version and telling of the Genesis 1:28. In that portion of the poem, he adapts the command to blank verse:

Be fruitful, multiplie, and fill the Earth,  
Subdue it, and throughout Dominion hold  
Over Fish of the Sea, and Fowle of the Aire,  
And every living thing that moves on the Earth. (VII,  
531-534)

Obviously, given Milton’s faith and Biblical givens, he has to work with the language that the writer of Genesis gives him; however, as with the Biblical references in the rest of the

epic, Milton places this passage within the larger poetic context of *Paradise Lost*. And in this way, the critical question becomes, “How does Milton adapt and appropriate this particular language of dominion and control to his own moral, ethical, and indeed, political vision?”

For that purpose, the great chain of being he has Raphael relate in Book V provides an excellent piece for understanding how Milton envisions his cosmos within the poem—that is, how he understood and saw the relationships between living things and between the Earthly and the divine:

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
All things proceed, and up to him return,  
If not depra'd from good, created all  
Such to perfection, one first matter all,  
Indu'd with various forms various degrees  
Of substance, and in things that live, of life;  
But more refin'd, more spirituous, and pure,  
As neerer to him plac't or neerer tending  
Each in thir several active Sphears assignd,  
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root  
Springs lighter the green stalk,, from thence the  
leaves  
More aerie, last the bright consummate floure  
Spirits odorous breathes: flours and thir fruit  
Mans nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd...  
Differing but in degree, of kind the same. (V. 469-483,  
490)

In this way, everything is connected to every other and all are of God. And—using a strikingly organic, plant metaphor versus a detached and mechanistic or even legalistic hierarchical model—Milton suggests a kind of fluidity and similarity between and among living things. All being a part of a Godly



cosmos and creation, and connected through a divinely organic and material connection, Milton holds life and creation in very high regard.

And though this construction is hierarchical, Milton also constructs a natural order that is based upon mutuality and co-submission. Taking the idea of kenosis (literally, self-emptying and humbling) very seriously, Milton points to these moments where God the Son pours himself into creation and in which objects of creation pours themselves into other objects. And if this pouring is given in goodness, the giver is not lessened by this process, but glorified and magnified. While this happens multiple times throughout the text, one of the clearest moments of this ethic and dynamic occurs with the creation of the sun and the gift of light by Light, and the subsequent creation of the moon. As Light gives her beams to the Sun, which in turn allows his light to be borrowed by the Moon, none feel her or himself impaired as the glory of God is made manifest in them through this poignant act of sharing (VII, 355-377). Given Milton's touching fondness for light (as evidenced by his Invocation to Light and his own blindness), this mutuality is significant and powerful; the fact that Light has creative power implies for Milton a responsibility to share, to submit, and to care for the other parts of creation. This sharing is what makes Light's dominion of the heavens both good and of God.

Hence, when this goodness is absent from this submissive dominion, tyranny takes its place. Pointing to the distinction between dominion and tyranny and contrasting glorification and care with debasement and destruction, Milton uses *Paradise Lost* in this way to continue his articulation of the differences between liberty and license—seeing dominion connected to the former and tyranny connected to the latter. For this purpose, Milton's articulation of tyranny and democracy, *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, clarifies this understand tyranny and license: "For indeed none can love free-

dom heartily, but good men; the rest love not freedom, but license; which never hath more scope of more indulgence under tyrants." (Flannagan, 1057) In this way, power (dominion) over something or someone is not problematic in itself, but that power without goodness is. Without that goodness and a clear sense of duty and responsibility, liberty is transformed into license—from "the exercise of free will" to "the abuse of choice"—just as dominion is transformed into tyranny (Flannagan, 251).

Thus, Milton sets up a striking comparison and contrast throughout the epic. In a dialectical fashion, these oppositions are set up—between God and Satan, between prelapsarian and post-lapsarian, and between this connection of dominion and liberty, and tyranny and license. Although he does use various metaphors of God exercising his control over his Empire and over all creation, Milton goes to great pains to demonstrate how God embodies an ethic of care and responsibility. Indeed, as the "Sovran Planter" (IV, 691), God does not take life from creation, but rather compels it into existence and nurtures it. (Here, I would argue that Evans misreads "sovrain planter" by looking at it only through the historical lens of agricultural imperialism, rather than in the context of the poem (43).) Thus, looking at God as creator and as muse, life is both precious creation of God and indeed a part of him. And Milton shows this love of Paradise and creation through Raphael's narration in Book VII:

... The Earth obey'd, and strait  
Op'ning her fertile Womb teem'd at Birth  
Innumerable living Creatures, perfect formes,  
Limb'd and full grown: out of the ground up rose  
As from his Lair the wilde Beast where he wonns  
In Forrest wilde, in Thicket, Brake, or Den;  
Among the Trees in Pairs they rose, they walk'd: (VII,  
453-459)

Not only does this passage and the rest of the Creation story express what McColley describes as a "sensuousness and kinetic empathy," it also underscores the fact that this creation is both part of God and the result of God's work (123). Working with not only the idea of an omniscient and omnipotent God, Milton sees an omnipresent God: "Omnipresence fills / Land, Sea, and Air and every kind of lives" (XI, 336-37). And being a part of God himself, this construction of creation implies a sacred-ness and demands an attitude of responsibility toward the land.

In turn, when God tells Adam and Eve that they have Dominion over Paradise, he transfers this ethic to Adam and Eve, who act as tenders of this Garden, as supporters of this life. As McColley argues this relationship with nature "reinterprets human dominion as a sacred trust" (125), she continues by writing, "Milton's unprecedented representation of Adam and Eve before the Fall actually dressing and keeping the garden makes not heroic warfare or empire building, but earth-keeping the high calling of the active life." (128). As keepers of the Earth and as tenders of the Garden, their work is not about domination and exploitation of life; rather, it is akin to pruning, paring away for the greater glorification of God and creation. The fact that it is enjoyable shows that they share God's ethos of responsibility and care; they enjoy this job as part of their dominion because they are working out of goodness. In this way, Adam's aubade to Eve at the beginning of Book IV demonstrates this ethic, as he calls her to rise as well as work:

Her hand soft touching, whisperd thus. Awake  
My fairest, my espou'd, my latest found,  
Heav'ns last best gift, my ever new delight,  
Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field  
Calls us, we lose the prime, to mark how spring  
Our tended plants, how blows the Citron Grove,

What drops the Myrrhe, and what the balmie Reed,  
How nature paints her colours, how the Bee  
Sits on the Bloom extracting liquid sweet. (V, 17-25)

Part of the natural order, they submit themselves to the Garden, understanding that this submission is for the glory of God and Life. Despite being given complete liberty and dominion over the Garden, Adam and Eve are to use that power for the glory of God and of good. Furthermore, the epic voice suggests that this work may be the most important pursuit in Paradise, as it describes the discussion between Adam and Raphael on astronomy. Calling this discourse "studious thoughts abstruse," the voice also describes Eve getting up to go tend in her nursery, constructing her work as deeply and equally important. Indeed, this act is the practice/praxis of what Adam states as his theoretical justification for his curiosity concerning the creation: "to magnifie his works, the more we know" (VII, 97). Again, in this case, goodness is paramount here, and for Milton, goodness is obedience; as McColley argues, "When God gives his creatures into their care, he designates one tree not for human consumption. This small condition reminds them of their creaturehood and of their responsibility to exercise restraint in their use of other created things" (129). Liberty requires restraint, and dominion similarly implies restraint from exploitation and of the licentious use of nature.

Satan, however, provides the critical anti-thesis to God's adamant declaration of restraint and obedience. The ultimate tyrant, who exercises license over creation, Satan sees creation as the fruit of God, which must be corrupted and destroyed. Rather than celebrating life and creation, his work is not only to defame God, but to conquer and pervert his Creation. Laying out this project as he sits in the shape of a cormorant atop the Tree of Life, Satan says, "Honor and Empire with revenge enlar'd, / By conquering this new World,

compels me now / To do what else though damnd I should abhorre" (IV, 390-392). Recognizing his own evil, he nevertheless abandons goodness to destroy creation and hatch "vain Empires;" that is, "to waste his whole Creation, or posses / All as our own, and drive as we were driven, / The punie inhabitants..." (II, 378, 365-367).

In this respect, Milton portrays Satan as an aspiring conqueror of Nature in the more traditionally imperial sense—exploiting nature for the purpose of hoarding, and for the purpose of material gain. And while Satan implies this in his language, this frame of mind is most concretely seen, not in Satan, but in one of his demonic followers Mammon, whom the epic voice describes as such:

Men also by his suggestion taught,  
Ransack'd the Center, and with impious hands  
Rifl'd the bowels of their mother Earth  
For Treasures better hid. Soon his crew  
Op'nd into the Hill a spacious wound  
And dig'd out ribs of God... (I, 685-690)

As part of the fallen angels and a fallen psychology, Mammon uses the land in a very direct and sexualized way. Wounding Earth, this type of dominion shifts to a tyranny akin to rape in its defilement of life and of God.

And yet, this hoarding and rapine plundering of the land points to a more philosophical and moral corruption of Nature, which Satan himself embodies. Using Nature and Life as a means to an end of self-glorification—rather than as a glorious embodiment of God's creation and providence—Satan exploits. Rather than working and using Nature in a responsible and care-full manner to promote life and creation, as Adam and Eve do before the Fall, Satan seeks to use Nature for his own gain. Rather than submit, as godly dominion implies, he seeks to rule as a tyrant. And as such,

his use of the snake is appropriate. Using the snake as a means to an end, his false kenosis reflects his false and perverted view of Nature: exploiting it for his own gain.

And sadly, Satan's use of the snake for his own dark ends begins the ecological shift that Adam and Eve complete at the Fall—and hence, what makes the notes ecologically tragic at the start of Book IX. By persuading Eve and, through her, Adam to disobey, Satan deceives them into using the Tree of Knowledge as a means to an end of their own self-glorification. Rather than enjoy their freedom and liberty, stay within their moral bounds, and glorify God, they seek to glorify themselves, and to become tyrants over Eden through their disobedience.

In his speech to Eve, Satan persuades her to do this through the use of brilliant and odious (but flawed) logic. Arguing that eating the fruit will lead to a greater and more extensive knowledge, he states to Eve that she can aspire to and reach Godhead by eating the apple. In this respect, he critically shifts and perverts her understanding of nature. Rather than using nature and creation to glorify God, she now uses it to glorify and raise herself. Not seeing that this sin nulls and voids Raphael's promise that through obedience she and Adam can lift themselves up to angelic status, she feels the need to cure herself of her ignorance—not through praise and through judicious use of liberty, but through disobedience and abuse of her free will—license (IX, 680-781).

This deception and faulty logic becomes even more ironic as she immediately idolizes the Tree after eating the apple. As she aspired to Godhead, she now willingly places herself even beneath the plants. Rather than being a steward, she has adapted the Satan's tyrannical rationale to her own fallen ethic. In similar fashion, Adam (even before his tasting of the fruit) aspires to know the mind of God:

Nor can I think, that God, Creator wise,  
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy  
Us his prime Creatures, dignifi'd so high,  
Set over all his words, which in our Fall,  
For us created, needs with us must faile,  
Dependent made; so God shall uncreate,  
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour loose,  
Not well conceav'd of God, who though his Power  
Creation could repeate, et would be loath  
Us to abolish, least the Adversary  
Triumph... (IX, 938-948).

And in his tasting the fruit, the pride enumerated in this passage becomes complete. Using the fruit and his disobedience to test God's love and forgiveness, Adam uses the fruit to justify his own faulty logic. Like Eve, he aspires to Godhead, and then immediately debases himself by using his most treasured part of Creation, Eve, as a means to satiate his lust. Rather than being a helpmate and partner, his marriage becomes based upon self-glorification rather than mutual submission and mutuality. He has become a tyrant in his own relationship with Eve and with Eden, which only escalates in its violent nature, as the two blame each other for the Fall through the rest of Book IX.

In addition, the immense pain that Nature and Heaven feels as a result of this fundamental moral shift certainly is part of a pastoral tradition's use of the pathetic fallacy, but it also reflects the deep ecological damage that was done and will be done. Assumedly, Mammon's urging of men to plunder and wound Earth comes only after the Fall. Similarly Nimrod exercises "Dominion absolute" (read tyranny) and causes ecological damage in a post-lapsarian world (XII, 68). Seeing this future as historical past, Milton's depiction of Nature's grief becomes even more poignant. After Eve plucks and eats, "Earth felt the Wound, and Nature from her seat /

Sighing through all her works gave signs of Woe / That all was lost..." (IX, 781-793). And after Adam, "Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again / in pangs, and Nature gave a second groan / Skie lowr'd and muttering Thunder, som sad drops / Wept at completing the mortal Sin Original..." (IX, 1000-1004).

In this way, all of Creation recognizes the fundamental shift in Adam and Eve's psychology, of which their attitudes toward Nature is one part. And Milton—mainly through the epic voice—goes to great pains to express the pathos of this fact. It is with great sadness and grief that Heaven and Earth realize the fall. As angels mourn and weep for original sin, so Earth will continue to bear the scars of that sin, as animals prey after one another, as humankind makes war upon itself, and as nature is continuously used for self-gratification, rather than approached with a pre-lapsarian ethic of care and responsibility.

Indeed, because I, like Milton, recognize the damaging effects and tragedy of mistaking liberty with license in terms of nature, I see environmental restoration as a deep and fundamental part of "repair[ing] the ruins of our first parents" (Flannagan, 980.) Just as God the Son repairs the environmental ruins of the war in heaven, replacing the mountains and continents and rebuilding the Natural beauty of Heaven, so it would appear our duty to rebuild our Earth. And I think Milton would agree—seeing continued disobedience in the mistaking of license and liberty, seeing tyranny over nature as a continuous reaffirmation of the Fall and of Fallen psychology. And while working to repair this damage may be "labourious indeed at the first ascent," reaching the top may be "so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming" (Flannagan 981). At that point, it may be possible to stand atop our own Niphates or cliff in the forests of America, with a sense of appreciation for life and for



the Earth—with an ethic of care, responsibility, and a just sense of liberty. And, indeed, it may be possible to look the images of Doré and Durand without any grief or nostalgia. This, I believe, is Milton's most fervent wish as well.

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# The Obfuscation of Illusory Reality

## By Michal Merraro

[DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

Me, *actress and author*

Textbook

Shakespeare, *playwright*

Naïve Freshman

Jaded English Professor

Anne Barton, *whiz kid quoted in Shakespeare book*

Overarching Narrator of "The Obfuscation of Illusory Reality"

SCENE: *The spinning mind of the author, contemplating bits of Shakespeare's metatextual dialogue in A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest, As You Like It, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, and The Taming of the Shrew: the dialogue breaks the fourth wall between audience and performer to create fractal layers of illusion, which in turn enhances the actions of characters in greater realities]*

ACT I, SCENE I

*Enter ME.*

*Me.*

I was in a play once in preschool. The play was about a girl who loved to eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. I tried out for the part of the girl, but I got the part of the jelly.

The girl pushed me from the cabinet, in one corner of the stage, to the bread, in the middle of the stage. I was supposed to stand there for twenty minutes next to the boy who was playing the peanut butter.

It all sounded so easy.

But the lights were *bright* on the stage. And it was *hot* in my jelly costume. And I was *tired*. I didn't *want* to stand still next to the boy who was playing the peanut butter.

So I started to look around. I looked my hands. I looked at the floor. I looked at the audience. I saw my mom sitting in the front row. I waved hello.

Soon after that I was done being the jelly. The girl pushed me the rest of the way off the stage.

The boy who played the peanut butter was done too. He was frowning.

At me.

"You did that wrong," he whispered. "You should have pretended to be jelly."

"What do you mean?" I asked, confused. "I did pretend. I was a good jelly!"

"No you weren't," he said. "When you waved to your mom, you admitted that you were *you*. Everybody knew that you weren't really jelly then. You know, you really aren't that good."

I really wasn't that good?

I was crestfallen.

Years later I was in a college classroom, discussing theatrical techniques, and I found out about something called "the fourth wall."

Boom! Epiphany! I realized my preschool mistake.

## ACT II, SCENE II

*Enter* TEXTBOOK.

*Text.*

The very nature of traditional theatre decrees that it play on the worlds of illusion and reality. When actors get up on stage, they read prescribed lines. Their movements are blocked out in advance. They become *in character*, and act as though they are someone else. They want their characters to become real to the audience, so much so that the audience forgets that they, the actors, truly exist.

Next, once the actors are masked as the characters, pretending that the illusory characters are the reality, the actors/characters must then ignore the audience, and pretend that they are not acting. The characters are just going about their daily lives, acting as they usually do, and the audience has managed (however do we do it?) to hide behind an invisible wall, glimpsing a peek into the character's private lives.

The process of theatre is thus a series of mutually agreed upon lies: one must completely mask the actor so that the character becomes real, while denying the existence of said mask in the first place. Then, once the mask is in place, the actors act and do admit that there is an audience... while at the same time, the audience watches attentively, never admitting that what they watch is an illusion.

## ACT II, SCENE I

*Enter SHAKESPEARE.*

*Shakes.*

*"If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended,  
That you have but slumb'ed here  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,  
No more yielding than a dream,*

*Gentles, do not reprehend.  
If you pardon, we will mend.  
And, if I am an honest Puck,  
If we have unearned luck  
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,  
We will make amends ere long;  
Else the Puck a liar call.  
So, good night unto you all.  
Give me your hands, if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends."*

(Puck's final soliloquy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i  
lines 423-438)

*Enter NAÏVE FRESHMAN.*

*Fresh.*

What?! What is this?! Shakespeare admits to having his  
lines read by actors?! In a play?! How can this be?!

## ACT II, SCENE II

*Enter JADED ENGLISH PROFESSOR.*

*Prof.*

You are, for all intents and purposes, an idiot. This is *not* difficult. Let me spell it out for you in simple English: Shakespeare likes to have fun with the audience. He adores wordplay, and he wearies of the basic four-sides-to-the-stage-and-you-see-through-one-of-them theatre technique. In fact, he breaks this rule whenever possible by writing metatextual dialogue, and tweaking the concept of onstage reality. His characters speak of their own status as characters, forcing the audience to acknowledge their act of being at the theatre. Shakespeare's plays are a fantasy, they are not real life. And

both the audience and the characters know it.

*Me.*

Absolutely. To wit: Puck's final soliloquy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when he addresses the audience. You can analyze it word by word, letter for letter, to see how he deconstructs the illusion of the play as reality. Puck completely abandons the façade of the fourth wall; he doesn't even bother to speak to the other characters, but addresses the audience directly. "We shadows" are the characters of *Midsummer*. The "you" in "you have but slumbered here" are the people watching *Midsummer*; "these visions" are the scenes which have just taken place. "This weak and idle theme" is the plot of *Midsummer*, which, like a dream, will vanish after the audience awakens to true reality and leaves the theatre. "Gentles, do not reprehend" is again an entreaty to the audience not to be offended by the bad acting which may have taken place – the actors will do better next time, so the audience shouldn't hiss them off the stage with a "serpent's tongue." Instead, if they have been pleased, they should applaud and give the actors the acclaim that they deserve, to show that everyone is "friends."

## ACT III, SCENE I

*Fresh.*

Okay, so the monologue questions the concept of reality. The audience knows that it's real; but what about the characters? Are they real too?

*Me.*

You know, Luigi Pirandello wrote this great play, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, which talks about -

*Prof.*

Shut up. I don't care if that's relevant, I want to address the idiot's question so I can sound important.

Yes, the characters are real. They exist, but in a lesser degree of reality than does the audience. The play is fractal: one theme is inside another which is inside yet another. Bottom and his friends are characters in *Midsummer*, a play watched by us, the outside audience. Yet the characters of Bottom and friends act in the play *Pyramus and Thisby*, creating their own new level of reality. Now Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers are their audience. Yet all the earthly mortals are in turn watched by the fairies, who, according to our (the outside audience) minds, can be the least "real" of all. The least real becomes the most real, for in the end, it is Puck who addresses us, and asks for applause for *Midsummer*.

*Me.*

Your fractals abound throughout all the play:

"I never may believe  
These antic fables, nor these fairy toys.  
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends."  
(*Midsummer*, Act 5.1 lines 3-6)

The "antic fables" and "fairy toys" have meanings within meanings, layers within layers; Theseus isn't just waxing poetic about fantasies, he's commenting on the reality of the fairies, the play within a play, and himself as a character.

*Text.*

Observe diagram below.

## ACT III, SCENE II

*Fresh.*

But you haven't said why. Okay, so Shakespeare breaks the fourth wall to show that theatre's an illusion. But what's his point?

*Me.*

To emphasize the possibilities of reality, and make it more significant. Puck's end monologue lets the audience focus on the nature of their own reality, so maybe they will make some changes in their own life. There are tons of examples of this – look at Quince, in the Prologue to *Pyramus and Thisby*. “The actors are at hand; and, by their show/ You shall know all, that you are like to know” (V.i lines 116-117). Quince breaks down the fourth wall between *Pyramus* and *Thisby* and the lovers (*Pyramus*' audience), in hopes of spurring on the lovers and acting as catalyst for a declaration of emotion. Even if the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are more illusory than the lovers (which can be debated, since it is Puck who has the most outside reality in the end), it is only by their intervention that the lovers realize the depth and truth of their emotions.

*Fresh.*

I still don't get it.

[Prof. sighs heavily]

## ACT IV, SCENE I

*Shakes.*

“You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort,



As if you were dismay'd; be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors  
(As I foretold you) were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air,  
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And like this insubstantial pageant faded  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep."  
(The Tempest, IV.i lines 146-158)

*Prof.*

Reality and illusion is, truly, a very common theme. I'm disappointed that you haven't noticed it before. I'm not even going to bother explaining how Prospero's famous lines violate the invisible wall. It's much too obvious – "these our actors were all spirits," indeed! And the "great globe itself:" lovely parody on the literal theatre in which *Tempest* was staged! And all while commenting on the frailty of human life and the end of Shakespeare's career as a playwright - this play practically specializes in metatextualism!

*Text.*

The fractal layers of illusion in *The Tempest* include:  
Actors play Prospero, Miranda, et al.

Prospero controlling the magic-world of Ariel and the sprites

The sprites playing goddesses at the banquet

The shipwrecked men are confused: "Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?"

A living drollery" (*Tempest*, Act III.iii lines 20-21). A living drollery, a puppet show with live actors, is both the sprites'

banquet and the play *The Tempest* itself: the actors playing Alonso and Sebastian repress their own personalities to imbue the characters with life. They are live puppets giving the characters voice through their bodies.

*Me.*

This goes back to what I was saying before.

Shakespeare is eradicating the fourth wall, and says that reality is better than fantasy. Prospero loves his magic, but gives it up for his daughter; he chooses the reality of Duke-dom over the more fanciful illusion of the island. The illusory world is a tool used to nudge reality along. In *Midsummer* those in the lesser reality make those of greater reality take action; fairies help Demetrius and company fall in love. Here, in *The Tempest*, the magical fantasy is used to spur on Ferdinand and Miranda, and settle old debts between Prospero and Antonio. The levels of reality simplify as they run their course, and the characters lose their necessity for illusion.

## ACT IV, SCENE II

*Fresh.*

So we have the wall thing in two plays so far. What about others?

*Shakes.*

"This wide and universal theatre  
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene  
Wherein we play in."  
(*As You Like It*, II.v, lines 137-139)

*Text.*

Quotes the Riverside Shakespeare 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: [These

lines are] thought to be a reference to the Globe theatre, built in 1599, and its motto... 'The whole world plays the actor.'"

*Shakes.*

"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages."

(As You Like It, II.v lines 140-145)

*Me.*

If you're trying to compare illusions, you can't get any better than As You Like It. The actor playing Jaques keeps his mask (as Jaques) on, while encouraging the audience to drop theirs. They need to realize that human beings are all actors in our own right; we pretend to have characteristics we lack, or pretend not to be the people we are, according to the impressions we want to give those around us. From birth until death, infant to second childishness, our external appearance is largely made up of masks and illusions. Shakespeare's dialogue brings the audience face-to-face with their own inner characters. His hope is that through viewing the illusion of his play, people might change how they act in the reality of their day-to-day lives.

## ACT V, SCENE I

*Prof.*

And don't even dream of leaving out Hamlet or The Taming of the Shrew! The connections may not be as immediately apparent as they are in the other plays, but they are there, nonetheless.

*Fresh.*

How? Hamlet's about madness and revenge. There's a ghost, Ophelia, the plot to kill the king –

*Prof.*

Yeeeeeesss? Think of “Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well us'd, for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death you were better to have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live” (Hamlet Act II.ii lines 522-526).

*Fresh.*

Right, that was from by the play-within-a-play! Hamlet had the players perform The Mousetrap in order to find out if the King had really murdered his father... the reality they're talking about is both the players' reality, of The Mousetrap, and the reality of all historical figures whom Shakespeare and other writers immortalized. The existence of the players points out the fourth wall, and introduces an inner fractal. But wait... how would you tie that into “enhancing the actions of those in the greater reality?”

*Me.*

It's simple, really. You almost had it. Hamlet couldn't solve the mystery of the ghost and murder while still living in the reality he was given; in order to find out the answers he had to create a new one, the illusory reality of the play-within-a-play. The Mousetrap made the characters think about what had happened, and so influenced the events in the larger realm of Denmark. If Hamlet had stayed in the larger context the whole time, life wouldn't have the same significance and meaning to the King, Queen, and rest of the courtiers that it did after the other level was introduced.

## ACT V, SCENE II

*Enter ANNE BARTON.*

*Bar.*

"The idea of the play set within a frame seems to have been especially popular in the late 1580's and early 1590's... The Taming of the Shrew is one of a number of plays surviving from this period which presented the audience with an image of itself in the form of one or more on-stage spectators who watch, and therefore help to distance, an illusion" (Riverside Shakespeare 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 140).

*Me.*

No! I refuse! I can't do it. I won't! That play is too horrible to try and analyze for strains of reality! Poor Kate. She was such a good feminist character until that last act.

Yes, it's a frame story, and therefore introduces the theme of characters within characters, and reality within reality. But that's as far as I'll go! You can't make me go any farther than its form. I'll boycott.

*Enter OVERARCHING NARRATOR OF "THE OBFUSCATION OF ILLUSORY REALITY."*

*Narr.*

That's okay. You're at nine pages anyway. It only had to be six to ten.

*Me.*

Thank god. I don't think I could have handled it. Just the very title of the play itself offends me. Imagine if I had to comment on the rest of it!

*Narr.*

No worries. Just restate that Shakespeare's plays often utilize techniques of breaking down the theatrical fourth wall in order to explore layers of reality and illusion so that his characters and the audience will further their actions, and you'll be done.

*Me.*

What a brilliant idea. I should recap. Overall, we have learned that Shakespeare utilizes different techniques to break down the theatrical fourth wall; he does this so that he may explore layers of reality and illusion, and influence the actions of both his characters and his audience. Whew.

*Narr.*

See you at the final!

[Exeunt.]

## “Ice Ice Baby” by Vanilla Ice by Brett Mosley

Popular in the early nineties, Vanilla Ice, a rapper, made American pop culture and many teens sway in a direction of fun and flashy entertainment. Ice was one of the first “White” rappers in the mainstream entertainment market. His career was a relatively short one, lasting only a few years. Coming from humble beginnings in a low-income Miami area, Ice was influenced heavily by “Black” culture and its music. Ice made and lost most of his money very fast. Towards the end of his career, Americans had labeled Ice as a “sell-out” because of appearances in movies such as “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” and various commercials. But Ice did usher in an era of more consumer-friendly rap and helped to spring rap into more households than ever in America. Ice’s career started with a bang with the song that I will analyze, “Ice Ice Baby,” as the epicenter. Ice thinks that he is better than other rappers, and he uses a very vivid and colorful approach primarily of similes, vivid connotations, and rhymes to convey this message.

“Ice Ice” Baby is a song that Vanilla Ice wrote about himself, his lifestyle, and how good a rapper he is. He also raps about how he is better than other MC’s in the music world. Before the second verse he goes into a chorus where he repeats, “Ice Ice Baby Vanilla.” After the chorus, he describes a day on the streets of Miami. Ice describes a ride in his “5.0” or Mustang convertible down a vibrant Miami beachfront street. When he encounters some “chumps” or people that he despised that were high off “eight balls” or cocaine, the “chumps” fired weapons and Ice jumped in his car and sped off, escaping the police. This verse paints a quick and effective portrait of life on the streets of Miami. A final chorus precedes the conclusion of the song, in which Ice continues to describe how great he is, how great his DJ is

and how much he likes to entertain.

Throughout the song, Ice rhymes the ends of every two lines with each other in rhyming couplets. Because of this, "Ice Ice Baby" has a very catchy and playful vibe. The song flows incredibly smoothly and is easy to listen to. You can easily visualize the message that Ice is trying to convey. The first sentence that jumps out at you is, "Will it ever stop yo I don't know/ turn off the lights and I'll glow." If you just glance over this and keep reading, or singing in this case, you will easily miss how deep and insightful it is. He is saying in the first line that he doesn't know if he will ever stop rapping or ever not be popular, which is a very bold statement. But then, in the second line, he realizes that his career could end, however, he knows that if he did fade from the public eye, his legacy will endure. Many of my friends and I know how to sing most of this song by heart, so I think that his legacy will endure long like a "glow." The term "glow" has flawless connotations. The image of a glowstick pops into mind when thinking of this line. It fits perfectly with a deeper meaning of enduring. It may also be an appropriate symbol because if something glows when the lights have been turned off, a person's focus may be placed on that object. Here, the object being focused on would be Vanilla Ice.

Vanilla Ice goes on to rap about himself in this song in the next verse as he continues: "To the extreme I rock a mic like a vandal." In this simile Ice is continuing to hype himself up. He continues with his cocky and egocentric attitude by adding to his "better than the rest" attitude. Also, he says that he can entertain or rap greatly with a microphone. The use of the name "Vandals," who were a popular punk group decades ago is his comparison himself to the extremeness or greatness of the "Vandals." It also has connotations of a punk or a thrasher.

Ice continues with: "I'm killing your brain like a poisonous mushroom / deadly when I play a dope melody": This line,



another simile, is one of the most vivid and powerful in the song. I interpret this to mean that his musical talents are so great that they will leave you in awe. Obviously, he cannot kill you like a "poisonous mushroom," but his melodies can be compared to mushrooms that will make you crazy and kill you. The second line, an alliteration, builds on to the first line mentioned. He is saying that his music is really powerful when he performs his great songs. The alliteration links "deadly and melody" and helps to enforce the "poisonous mushroom" statement in the line before it.

The first simile in the second part of the song, "I'm burning MC's like a pound of bacon," is ripe with imagery (MC's meaning music coordinators). Ice is saying that he is so talented that he can out-perform any other performer by a huge margin, comparing any musician that has not been compared to him as a pound of bacon. After being compared to him, they will turn out so badly beaten by Ice that they can be compared to a pound of burnt worthless bacon. A piece of bacon comes from a pig, and Ice is comparing all of the other MC's to pigs. Ice obviously has no respect for other entertainers.

The next to last simile, "Cause my style's like a chemical spill," Ice says that his style or his image and music are like a chemical spill or something that will overtake the people and landscape. The connotation of a chemical spill is very powerful and is a fine description of the power of his music. His music is truly like a chemical spill because it is broad and very infectious: another powerful line that helps add to Ice's description of how good he is. This statement can also mean that, Ice knows that he is catchy and makes fun of himself because of this. In this line Ice takes on a very playful tone.

"Feasible rhymes that you can vision and feel / conducted and formed its hell of a concept." This passage is about how his songs are well thought of and done. In analyzing "Ice Ice Baby," I have come to see this is true. Ice uses language that

is simple yet meaningful. By using the term “hell of a concept,” Ice is saying that other performers are inferior to him. “Magnetized by the mic while I kick my juice,” in this final quote Ice is saying that Vanilla enjoys entertaining and that the microphone will draw him to perform. Ice is a fun and exciting rapper; this is evident throughout the lyrics of this song. This catchy and flowing musical number masks the great and sometimes odd ego that Ice displays throughout these lyrics, to create a flawless masterpiece.

An Executive Ideology  
An analysis of *Executive Decision*  
By Eva Sevcikova

If Karl Marx asserted that the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch also the ruling intellectual ideas, then Antonio Gramsci and Gina Marchetti show that the exercise of these ideas is always problematic. Similarly, both Will Wright and Pierre Macherey concern themselves with a related task—a figuration of the events within a specific text, which serve to fulfill the presentation of these ruling ideas. *Executive Decision*, an American movie directed in 1996 by Stuart Baird, portrays the world superpower—the United States—threatened by Middle Eastern terrorists in a conflict, whose resolution attempts to show how justice is achieved with means of moral superiority and individual courage. Taking the above-mentioned theorists into account, the film serves as a fine example of how the ideology of the ruling class is embedded in a text while seemingly allowing for false resistance that then appeals to those against whom the ideology is working. Through its use of binary opposites and channeled resistance, the movie creates a universe of a closed system. More importantly, the structure of the meaning in this movie is an accurate mini-version of the hierarchical structure of the society at large, which centralizes the white male and marginalizes the Other.

In this action-suspense movie, one can easily discern a traditional formula that can be linked to the criteria established by Wright in his analysis of the classical American Western. Wright, who is interested in how the myths communicate a specific conceptual order to the members of the society, points to a fundamental binary structure that emerges in a text. According to Wright, in order to understand the workings of a myth, one must pay attention not only to the

progression of the events and the resolution of the conflict, but must also recognize and decode a specific binary structure. He argues that a myth "depends on simple and recognizable meanings, which reinforce rather than challenge social understanding" (121).

*Executive Decision* depends on several of such recognizable binary opposites—man/woman, good/bad, civilized/primitive, to mention just a few. At the beginning of the movie, we meet the Middle Eastern terrorists who epitomize villains and are juxtaposed with the American hero to create tension and highlight the heroes' positive qualities. While the viewer is offered little insight into the terrorists' background and the reasons behind their actions are only superficially explained, the viewers' attention is directed towards Colonel Austin Travis (played by Steven Segal) and David Grant (played by Kurt Russell). The tension between these two characters is finally resolved when Colonel Travis is killed and when David Grant emerges out of the conflict as the single hero and the main focus of the plot. There should be no doubt for the viewer on whose side to be. The blacks superplane, appropriately named Hail Mary, is to serve as an epitome of the traditional values of the civilized world. These are presented in opposition to the "uncivilized" terrorists whose system of values is pushed into the realm of stereotypes by them being portrayed as religious fanatics carrying around the Qu'ran in their pockets. The man/woman dichotomy will be discussed later in the paper.

Macherey's theory operates in a similar level. For Macherey, a text is definitely a construction with many meanings. According to this theory, a text consists of a confrontation between several discourses—explicit, implicit, silent and absent (Storey 119). While identifying all four discourses in relation to *Executive Decision* could be a topic for a whole new paper, Macherey's insights are of great value. In his discussion of the novels by Jules Verne, he

identifies many images, which are then grouped by Verne into a specific system whose role is to highlight French imperialism and to confirm the conquest of nature by man's industrial order. *Executive Decision*, as will be seen in the further discussion, also represents a closed and self-sufficient system that fulfills a single important function of reinforcing the dominant ideology.

However, in order for this movie to sell and make profit, it also has to appeal to those outside of power. Marchetti asserts that these movies must somehow allow for a place for resistance. The film does this in a very problematic way. As an example, one can use the group of military soldiers that David Grant (played by Kurt Russell) supervises. The purposeful racial make up of the group is obvious—there we have a Latino guy, an Asian guy, a black guy and a white guy. One could almost buy into the argument that these “buddies” represent the world working together in harmony to eliminate evil. But as Marchetti points out in her discussion, knowing how to decode this “buddy system” is crucial for our understanding of the hegemonic forces within a text. The racially mixed make-up of the soldiers serves to compensate for the ideological hegemony of the white male hero—represented by David Grant—who, predictably, rises as the top leader in the group even though his qualifications are those of a man sitting in an office at some think tank. And needless to say, he glamorously masters all the life-threatening situations wearing his stylish tuxedo. So on one side, there is the mainstream white male hero; on the other side, there are four buddies who are non-white and marginal. This specific casting of the characters allows the viewer to identify with someone other than the villain.

Although seemingly allowing space for an equal status of the buddies and the hero, the truth is much more alarming. Upon careful observation, we will notice that the Asian buddy is stereotypically silent throughout the entire movie. The

Latino guy, played by John Leguizamo, goes by the nickname "Rat" and his character radiates a traditionally viewed machismo. He is the only one in the group who vehemently speaks about his doubts that the flight attendant Jean (played by Halle Barry) may not be willing to help them. Following the logic of the situation, his doubts are rather non-sensical; they can only be justified by his stereotyped discomfort about having his male space invaded by the presence of a woman.

Furthermore, there is a rather complicated situation embodied in the character of Cappy—a token black guy. He is the only one in the group possessing the intellectual capacity to diffuse the bomb and is thus indispensable for the mission. His importance and presence, however, cannot be too strong as to devalidate the white male hero; therefore, Cappy ends up injured and paralyzed in his back for the majority of the movie. He is still capable of carrying out his part, but now, with his physical handicap, he is silenced and less threatening to the dominant power.

Following Gramsci's argument that despite oppression and exploitation, there is consensus and opportunity for resistance, these four soldiers of different racial backgrounds could almost account for this presence of resistance. However, Gramsci also asserts that subordinate groups and classes appear to support and subscribe to values, which bind them and incorporate them into the prevailing structures of power. It is thus important to notice not only the mere presence of the buddies, but the role they were assigned in the big picture. It becomes then obvious that these buddies identify themselves with the power relations within the white, male American culture by assigning their loyalty to the white hero.

What is important in this movie as in any other work is what it does not say. As Macherey points out, in order for something to be said, other things must be left unsaid. This analysis can be accomplished by looking at what (or who)

gets highlighted in the movie and who does not. In simple words, this tale is very much male dominated. The only female character of any importance is Jean (Halle Berry). The alarming fact is that in order for her to matter in any way, she has to be a flight attendant in a mini-skirt with high heels and with an impeccable make-up that remains untouched even after several fights and a plane crash. Right in accordance with Marchetti's analysis, the emphasis of the movie is traditionally placed "on the male body, its musculature and strength, and its ability to withstand torture and to kill efficiently" (191).

The female body, on the other hand, does not carry any of these attributes. If the male body is stereotyped in its muscularity, the female body is equally stereotypically portrayed by its emphasis on what is perceived as "female attributes"—beautiful, warm and nurturing. Jean is a stunning beauty, which is important, because it allows for a sexual tension to play out on two different fronts. It is quite obvious that Kurt Russell has an interest in her, but moreover, some kind of attractive force is resonating between Jean and the main leader of the terrorist group. It often appears that it is her stubbornness and the vamp-look in her eyes that keep the terrorist from surprisingly not shooting her at the first occasion. All in all, there is one definite thing the viewer can count upon—we can rest assured that Jean, despite being close to death numerous times, will not get killed in this movie. She is the only female character and is needed to represent the seeming resistance to the male hegemony. She will therefore survive situations that would get every other normal being killed.

The villains in this movie are classic Marchetti villains. With no doubts, they are outside the norm by being everything that the white hero is not. The terrorists are chosen to be—of course—foreign and dark. They often speak a different language throughout the course of the movie and even when

they speak English, they speak it with a strong accent. Their personal habits, such as kneeling on a blanket and praying, are nothing like those of the heroes, thus appearing strange and unusual. Marchetti further points out that the villain traditionally represents the dark side of the American dream. This is quite true in this movie as well. When the Navy men successfully penetrate the main plane and the pilot climbs downstairs to check for trouble, one of the soldiers pompously shows off his arm on which a patch with an American flag flashes with bright radiance. At this moment, the pilot sighs with relief, knowing that he is safe—that he is amongst his own people. The flag, in this particular instance, stands as a constructed symbol of the fight for freedom, independence and democracy. While the navy soldiers are on the American side by possessing and identifying with this symbol, the Middle Eastern terrorists are depicted in opposition to it.

By dichotomizing the characters and letting the “good” guys triumphantly defeat the “bad” guys, the reality of this movie is ultimately dictated by the needs and interests of the ruling class. In this case, the ruling class gets to represent the Western culture. America is on the good side, so to speak, holding hostage a dangerous terrorist and defending the world against those similar to him. The Middle Eastern villains with their desire to free this terrorist stand on the other side of the camp. America, as usually, does not only protect its own country and own people; it fights to supposedly free the entire humanity from evil. Thus the interests of one powerful society are being universalized as the interests of the society as a whole.

The critical analysis of this movie could go on indefinitely and more examples of hegemonic relationships could be easily observed. While many of the problematic issues in this movie are relatively easy to discern, it is also true that when the powers of ideology really work, we don't notice it. The danger of movies like this lies in the fact that they are sup-



posed to be cheap entertainment that allows one to zone out, relax and experience some “innocent” fun. However, when approaching any kind of text, we have an obligation to move beyond a merely passive absorbing. We need to be reminded of Macherey’s approach to a critical process, which focuses on the production of a new knowledge of the text—“one that explains the ideological necessity of its silences, its absences, its structuring incompleteness—the staging of that which it cannot speak” (Storey 119). *Executive Decision*, just like all narratives, contains an ideological project. It promises to tell the truth about the place of men and women and good and evil in this world, putting on the pedestal those whose interests this movie serves. But the truth remains that it cannot speak of many things, one of which is the ultimate fear of having this position of privilege threatened by any means.

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## Collective Responsibility

By Pallavi Visvanathan

A study of the history of a country often results in the discovery of hatred, persecution, war, and genocide. Incidents in a political scene often follow a cyclic pattern. Like the legendary phoenix, corrupt and brutal governments have arisen from the ashes of previous ones. Each regime comes to power promising deliverance from tyranny but often repeats the reign of terror. As in the case of Hutu Power, citizens may even be required to participate in their tyrannous actions, including murder, to prove fealty to the government.

Towards the end of the last century however, new governments have made attempts to break out of this cycle. They have attempted to bring peace to their countries. One unavoidable concern has been how to punish perpetrators of war crimes and to make reparation to the victims. As has been the case in Rwanda, South Africa, and Argentina, a kind of collective responsibility has been demanded of the perpetrators of crimes of genocide and war. Although this concept of collectivism is promoted by the heads of these countries and accepted by some, it does not find favor with everyone.

George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Meredith, 1999, p.19). In the past attempts have been made to exterminate Armenians, Tutsis, Argentineans, Native Americans, South African Blacks and Jews to name just a few unlucky groups. The successors of regimes that tried to eradicate some of these groups seem to have taken Santayana's words to heart. They have instituted certain policies that they believe will ensure that the past is remembered and that the cycle of violence is broken. When the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) freed Rwanda from the rule of Hutu Power, Paul Kagame asked all Rwandans to take responsibility for their actions in an effort to return to the country a semblance of normality

(Gourevitch, 1998). In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was based on the principle of "reconciliation through accountability." It required that Afrikaners and South African Blacks take responsibility for any and every act of violence perpetrated against another (Meredith, 1999). In Argentina, in 1983, Raul Alfonsin set up the National Commission on the Disappeared to investigate atrocities committed by Isabel Peron's ousted military regime that had terrorized the country since 1976 (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989).

All three governments had to make certain compromises in their efforts to punish the guilty. In Argentina and in Rwanda, it quickly became impractical to continue to imprison the hoards of people guilty of serious crimes committed during the wars and genocide. Both Kagame and Alfonsin tried to arrest the senior officials and put them to trial rather than fill the jails and prisons with lower ranking officials and ordinary citizens. In Argentina, many of the arrests taking place were of military officials and Alfonsin had good reason to fear a military coup (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989). In 1987, Alfonsin passed the Due Obedience law, which granted immunity to those who had committed crimes like murder and torture under the command of a superior authority. This was similar to the policy of the TRC and the South African justice system that granted amnesty to South Africans who could show that the crimes they had committed had been for political reasons and with no other intent (Rosenberg, 1996).

Proponents of collective responsibility—Raul Alfonsin, Paul Kagame, Desmond Tutu—justify this policy by saying that it is a restorative form of action rather than vengeful retribution (Gourevitch, 1998; Kelman & Hamilton, 1989; Rosenberg, 1996). The idea is that it will break the cycle of violence stemming from vengefulness, the best example of which is the Hutu persecution of Tutsis in Rwanda. Tutu and Kagame also believe that it is the quickest and most efficient way to get the historically opposing groups—Blacks and

Whites in South Africa, and Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda—to live together peacefully (Gourevitch; Rosenberg).

Many people do believe in the validity of the concept of collective responsibility. For black South Africans, the TRC allows them to see their victimizers shoulder the responsibility of their actions and accept their wrongdoing. For these people, the centuries of subjugation by whites have come to an end and they are beginning to find their rightful place in the land of their ancestors. They find it only fitting for all white South Africans to be held responsible for the atrocities committed in the name of apartheid.

Liberal white South Africans like Wilhelm Verwoerd Jr. (Goodman, 1999) also believe that they must take collective responsibility for the crimes committed against black South Africans. As did some white American youth of the 1960s and 70s, they feel guilty for being the beneficiaries of apartheid – the exploitation of an entire race of people (Amato, 1982). Their acceptance of collective responsibility may also be seen as an attempt to reduce their guilt by sharing the responsibility. Amato says that social organizations are formed on the basis of shared guilt. This idea could also explain the rationality of the Hutu extremists who forced ordinary Hutus to kill their Tutsi neighbors.

Despite the solid contingent of supporters of collective responsibility, there are many people who do not and will not accept its validity. In South Africa, many whites, like erstwhile Presidents - Botha and deKlerk, still believe that apartheid was a necessary and appropriate policy for the development of the two races (Goodman, 1999; Meredith, 1999). They have not yet given up the ideology of the childlike African who is intellectually and morally inferior to the white person. Other white South Africans maintain that they knew nothing of the atrocities committed during apartheid. Some even say that they saw the actions of their fellow Afrikaners as part of the fight against the imposition of soviet imperialism (Meredith).

There can be no sense of collective responsibility if there is no sense of guilt. And there can be no feeling of guilt if there is no acceptance of wrongdoing.

Amato (1982) discusses the feelings of white working class Americans during the Black Power movement and attempts to describe their feelings. He says that the laboring whites believed that they had earned a place in American society by making sacrifices such as paying taxes and serving the country in wars and military conflicts. Policies like Affirmative Action place their traditions in the wrong. They then feel that their sacrifices are being denied recognition and that they thus no longer have a place in society. This idea parallels the Afrikaner fear of being overrun by blacks. They believe that they are South Africans and that in order to retain their identity, they must have control and must not share it with a race of people whom they see as undeserving of the privileges that the "superior" race enjoys.

It is not only the older generations of white South Africans that deny collective responsibility. Many of the younger generation also deny responsibility. Although they do not deny the guilt of their parents' generation, they refuse to take any responsibility on themselves. They believe that they are not responsible for actions that they themselves did not commit even though they have benefited from them. They see themselves as victims of their parents just as many children of Nazi parents do (Sichrovsky, 1988). They may also be rejecting their heritage in an attempt to avoid the self-hatred that is a side-effect of guilt (Amato, 1982).

Existentialists believe that the conscience is a product of the ideologies, laws, and actions of a society. This is also true of the identity of an individual (Amato, 1982). Collectivism thus is a paradoxical concept as it challenges individuality and yet is the basis of the individual's sense of identity. The arguments, for and against collective responsibility, of members of the different ethnic and social groups discussed in this

essay, are symbolic of this paradox.

Although some people oppose collective responsibility for crimes committed against target groups of people and others accept it, both attitudes of defensiveness as well as acceptance imply a preoccupation with the events of the past. However bleak the situation may look in South Africa, or Rwanda, or Argentina, the one consolation is that the preoccupation with the past indicates an absence of indifference or apathy which would be much harder to fight. If Santayana was right when he said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, we can only hope that the converse is true, that is, those who remember the past will not repeat it.

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## Decalogue Response: Film 1

By Vincent Waller

The Bible is as deep as space. It possesses stories simple enough for any child to understand while harboring mysteries that require lifetimes of investigation. With the Decalogue, we see the vast potential the Bible has for exploration. In a series of hour-long films, Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski vividly explores each of the Ten Commandments. In doing so, he engages his audience, inviting them to join him as well as his characters in their spiritual journey. Ultimately, Kieslowski does not provide any concrete answers, because he cannot. The Bible is a puzzle that no one can resolve without faith. For the faithless, this can be disturbing. As we see in Kieslowski's first film (Film 1), those without faith in God tend to worship other icons, only to discover that those icons are as imperfect as themselves.

Film 1, which corresponds to the commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Deuteronomy 5.7 Access Bible) is the tragic story of a young boy and his father. The young boy, Pavel, is curious as well as open-minded. In contrast, the father, Krzysztof, is only interested in that which is most tangible, secular, and measurable. The film climaxes with the tragic death of Pavel, which is sudden and unexpected.

Film 1 has many artistic characteristics, often suitable to the values of early Renaissance art. Like the works of Titian and Peter Paul Rubens, it has a definite central subject (with religious relevance): the First Commandment. This subject may not appear as clearly as Rubens' rendering of David slaying Goliath, but it is equally present. With a little investigation we see that Film 1 is centered on a man who breaks the First Commandment, and puts his faith into an icon of Science, rather than God. Unlike the Renaissance artists, however, Kieslowski relates to his audience in a way that is

much more universal.

Kieslowski's modestly budgeted film is universal because like the Bible (especially the Pentateuch), it focuses on basic themes of human existence—life, happiness, death, sadness, searching—while simultaneously appreciating the contemporary audience. Although he is working exclusively in the Polish language, this becomes an afterthought in the midst of such universal symbols as children at play, laughter, or eating. Unlike today's mainstream television media, Kieslowski is not trying to jolt a specific demographic, nor does he try to squeeze a jumbled mess of ideas into a half-hour segment. With care for his craft he produces an atmosphere that reminds us of the realness of reality. With steady shots he captures images of nature as well as humanity. The shot of a dead dog, the breakfast dialogue between a boy and his father, hands being washed with soap; no one of these events is intrinsically entertaining, yet each is effective in getting the audience to accept the world of Pavel as their own.

These techniques that Kieslowski employs are crucial because he wants us to understand that we are just like his characters. Indeed, the father, who breaks the First Commandment, shares Kieslowski's name: Krzysztof. Thus, although this character breaks the First Commandment, the point is that we all are sinful. As Jesus put so well, "Let anyone among you who is without sin to be the first to throw a stone..." (John 8.8 Access Bible). In this New Testament scenario where a woman was condemned to death by stoning, no one was able to respond to Jesus's challenge. Kieslowski's characters share the same dynamic characteristics as the Bible characters Jesus refers to. No one is simply good or evil, rather they are fragile and fallible just like us.

Krzysztof sins by breaking the First Commandment. Raised a Christian, he at some point has defected to the secular world, as his sister professes. He does not overtly

disavow God, but rather adopts a more tangible deity: Science. When his son asks him about the meaning of death, he does not respond by describing the soul's ascent to heaven; rather he gives a very specific medical account of cardiac arrest. He likes that which he can see, measure, and understand in practical terms. God does not fit these requirements, but his computer does. The turning point in the film is when he faithfully entrusts his son's life to the computer's readout, which suggests that the ice will be strong enough to support his son's weight. The computer is dead wrong. Clearly, his sin is putting the computer before God.

That said, he is not a bad person by any stretch of the imagination; he is no worse than any of us. He is a very intelligent man who loves and cares for his son. He does not depend solely on his computer, he also goes out to check the ice for himself. His son's death is not intended to be interpreted as God's wrath; rather, it demonstrates that humanity is imperfect. Krzysztof is not God; he cannot predict that the ice will break. His computer, a man-made invention, is no closer to God than the golden calf of the Israelites. He was simply a lost soul, without faith, who in time of need took solace in an unfeeling icon.

Film 1 ends abruptly, leaving us to think about what will happen to Krzysztof. It is not a real ending. This is fitting because the Bible itself does not have a real ending. We are left hanging in the balance, just like the Israelites, and just like Kieslowski himself. All we know is that God is loving and forgiving. He has provided us with the Ten Commandments, and as for those pieces of the puzzle we do not have—all he asks for is a little faith.





Detail of "Self Portrait 1" by Robin Judd

Newsom Awards 2002:  
Poetry

First Place

Meredith Wallis

## Grammy prefers Mozart

I wonder if she felt  
like an exile  
my grandmother here  
in her husband's country  
long after he had died  
not in the war  
but in a car.  
"God save the Queen"  
she'd say as a joke  
to no one or maybe  
to us—my sister and I  
who still don't understand  
why she said she couldn't go back  
why she'd tell the same story  
about playing piano  
in the basement, the blitzkrieg  
burning her neighbor's elm.  
Next to the Steinway, beating  
out the rhythm, her mother  
tells her, "curve your fingers,  
Elizabeth, war is  
no excuse for bad posture."  
And Grammy remembering,  
says London does not exist,  
sketches Chopin with her right hand.

## Second Place

Sarah Brauer

### Visiting Los Angeles

We sit around the backyard pool  
I dip myself in the leaf-ridden water,  
try to avoid shady parts near the deep end  
My family argues in a husky whisper  
so as not to disturb the summer day  
I float, fatigued from the sun, on a blue foam raft

It is faded and cracked from use;  
from body-slamming and surfing contests when the shade of  
that gigantic leafy tree  
was not so ominous  
over the moods of visitors  
The rusting, woven lawn chairs creak below the shifting  
weight of each stifling body

Grandpa says  
he came from a poor family and worked hard to become a  
convincing salesman  
He handles the gold beads at the end of his leather necklace  
I turn my face into the sun, squinting,  
though my eyes are closed,  
and I can't see everybody else's reaction

Mother asks for something cool to drink  
and is brought a cylindrical glass of water  
Staring down the glass in her hand, she finally sips,  
tonguing the side of the glass  
as she drinks



Auntie winks at me over mother's fussy ways and complain-  
ing

I think she is wise as has the gift of objectivity,  
her fat, hazelnut knees knocked together  
sitting in that lawn chair the way it was  
meant to be sat in  
sprawled in it

She has the brightest black eyes

I have ever seen

Feathery eyelashes the color of soot

and if you look insider her mouth you will see the ocean

It is like a conch

press it to your ear and

it will tell you true secrets

## Third Place

Tim Tiernan

### Syckle

Before my father wakes up,  
before the sun starts up I run  
through the streets I'm used to, and then  
up some residential road I haven't heard  
of; the yellow mist like the heavy ink  
of consciousness guides me barely  
from the tracks of tree roots  
that thirst out. This's my routine  
of breaking out of the monotone  
hum at home, where the newspapers  
stare back at him on a third read by 10 a.m.,  
dance on a fifth, and by dinnertime  
the word sprint out the door to wonder  
shat's become of them. So we two  
sit at dinner with silence asking us  
where've you been? How was it? If only.  
It was here, then years ago I think,  
you taught me the magic of right triangles,  
how to tell a Philips head from a flathead screwdriver,  
and in a fit of joy recited a passage of Greek  
onomatopoeia ricocheting from the arrow  
spun from someone's loose-taut bow. Some time after  
stacks of papers grew high with dust  
like the records of lost friends, the imagery  
the headlines, the deadline stress  
crept up like carpal-tunnel grist.  
I run past golf course sewer smells and imagine  
the spicy maybe, juice even, more possible

than most, than the dry untangled lives you nibble  
grain by humdrum grain, like one who knew every  
detail of his palm's lifeline, never to go away  
in death or sleep, never forgotten—the heap  
you refuse to take out or churn from lead,  
so you refuse to budge as Vanna White  
whirs a life around, spins questions into letters  
on a predestined map, and you're safe at the hub.  
And I'm that asshole in the story  
who drags your corpse around the track,  
but trying to wake you up.





"Self Portrait" by Michelle Vincent

Newsom Awards 2002:  
Fiction

## First Place

### Translation By Meredith Wallis

Ellen Engel sits in the kitchen of their apartment, holding a teaspoon in her left hand and pushing grains of salt back and forth across the surface of the card table that they eat on. John is late, an hour or so has passed since they were supposed to be at the movies. The baby is with the sitter. She keeps the television on the local news, because she knows John is dead. She scrapes the teaspoon against her palm and imagines the funeral. Ellen Engel has a black dress.

Twenty-six minutes later, John walks in complaining about the accident on the 605. He takes off his coat and opens the fridge, and then looks at her. "I'm sorry, honey, did you say something?"

She is crying, driving the teaspoon into her knee with her left hand, leaving a streak of salt on her jeans. He is confused, "I'm fine, Ellen. I'm fine. What's going on? There's showing at eight also. Or we could stay home? Ellen, sweetie, come here."

He hugs her and shakes his head; both of her hands remain at her side, the teaspoon dangling out of the left. "It's ok, Ellen."

Ellen Engel moves away from the man and sits down on the fold-out chair. She puts her head down on the table between her arms and whispers into the crook of her elbow, "I have you to thank for this. Every day of my life."

\*\*\*\*\*

Erwin Shrödinger has spent the entire day measuring the distance between the patterns of the dapples that sunlight makes on the kitchen table. Every four minutes, he records

the time of day, the distance between the dapples, the distance of each dapple from the center of the table, and then he draws a general sketch of the pattern. The design changes excruciatingly slowly. Colette is late, an hour or so has past since they were supposed to have lunch at the university. Erwin Shrödinger keeps his attention on the dapples, because he knows it is entirely possible that Colette is existing in a simultaneous dead-alive moment, and he chuckles to himself as he applies a theorem to determine the probability of her existence in this universe at all. His chuckle turns into a laugh and in that moment, he almost misses the shift of the sun to indicate 4:13 pm, but not quite. Erwin Shrödinger's friends incorrectly speculate that he has little to no sense of humor.

Colette walks in, carrying groceries and an oddly bent baguette. She unpacks her bag, and then looks at Erwin. "Je m'excuse, cher, as-tu dit quelque chose?"

He has studied French for years, first in Vienna, and now in Paris where he works. He is sure this means, "I'm sorry, my dear, did you say something?" He thinks it would sound better in German, and the placement of the umlaut makes him start to laugh again. She is confused, "Erwin? C'est bien, non? Qu'est-ce que c'est ça? Viens, fou, viens ici."

Translating what she said to Dutch and then to German yields the following amusing phrasology: "Erwin? It's well on the path to well, no? What is it that is it? Come, crazy fool, come here."

She hugs him and shakes her head, both of his hands remain sketching the dapples. "C'est bien, Erwin, fou. C'est bien."

Erwin Shrödinger moves away from the woman and sits down on the wooden chair, still giggling. He puts his head closer to the sunlight dapples and whispers to them, "I have you to thank for this. Every day of my life."



Ellen Engel is a science teacher and part-time soccer coach, but on the weekends she continues her attempt to read every book that starts with A in each section of the Central Public Library. Every Saturday, she leaves the baby with John and takes the Metro downtown. She says good morning to Edna, the librarian from the Arts section, whose most noticeable attribute is her hair, which almost reaches the desk she works at and is all together inappropriate for someone with her name. She is perhaps too young to be an Edna, but her mother had always been a bit old-fashioned. Ellen Engel uses the computers in Edna's section before starting off her day, specifically so she can have this momentary social interaction. Ellen Engel prefers relationships that are in passing.

"Morning, Ellen," Edna says. "Which section today?"

"I'm in the Social Sciences, I believe. *Another Day: Gender in the 18<sup>th</sup> century* to be exact." Ellen Engel pauses. "I miss the card catalogs."

"Me too," Edna agrees. They have lamented the passing of the card catalog every Saturday for five years, although both have adapted well to the computers.

Ellen Engel moves efficiently, checks out her ten books and pauses only to wish George, the security guard, a good day and inquire about his pregnant wife.

"And how is your kid, Ellen? When are you going to bring the baby by?" George asks, sticking to their well-rehearsed routine.

"Oh you know how it is to bring a baby on the Metro. Maybe next week." Ellen smiles and nestles seven books in her shoulder bag, carrying the remaining three. She will never bring her baby.

At home, she stops in the kitchen to put a pot of water on to boil and give John and the baby a kiss. Then, she takes her shoulder bag into the living room that she and John have converted into a study. She arranges all ten books alphabeti-

pastry. For five years, Erwin Shrödinger has pondered the idiom *chaçon son goût* and written it on the edge of all his papers when he finishes a problem. This particular day in 1925, he leans over the counter and says, "what was that, Jean-François?"

"J'ai dit, M. *Shrödinger*, *chaçon son gout*," Jean-François always chokes on Erwin Shrödinger's name, as if the sheer impossibility of pronouncing it in French physically pains him.

Erwin Shrödinger translates the phrase in his head, passing it through Spanish, and then through his limited English, finally settling on "I said, had said or have been saying, Master/Mister/Sir Shrödinger, to each or every one, his (own) taste."

He laughs out loud, grabbing the croissants and flipping the bag over to hastily scribble a formula. "Would you say that each person looks at these croissants in a different way or that each croissant is different in the looking?" He asks of Jean-François.

Jean-François remarks something rather ruder than "I would not know, Monsieur."

At the picnic, later that day, Erwin Shrödinger has set up a fake experiment and is rapidly detailing his idea to Colette who is counting the number of blades in the grass immediately to the right of her sandal. Occasionally, she looks up and nods, which appeases Erwin Shrödinger who has just finished turning over the picnic basket.

"Here, the apple represents a dog, or, say a cat." He stuffs the apple under the basket and breaks off part of the burnt croissant. "The croissant is a radioactive source, and the fork is the detector, one of those ones that records the presence of radioactive particles like a Geiger counter." He looks excitedly at Colette who is on the 415<sup>th</sup> blade. She nods.

"Then, let's say this glass contains a poison." Erwin Shrödinger pauses, sits back on the blanket and begins

scribbling numbers and graphs. 416 417 418 419 420

Colette notices his silence at 430 and worries that he might have noticed her state of boredom. "Mon cher, et puis?"

Erwin Shrödinger absently translates this phrase to Hungarian *my dear, what next?* and looks up, remembering suddenly that he is at a picnic with Colette, his girlfriend, possibly even at this moment his fiancée. "I'm sorry, love, I don't know what I was thinking. You don't want to listen to this."

He is in this moment crying, doubled over until his head touches his knee. He cannot believe that he ignores her; he does not have a language to explain the imperative nature of her existence in his. Erwin Shrödinger reaches for her and strokes her hair with his left hand. He tries to use the German word that translates in French to an "inexcusable and blinding blunder of misaligned fate." When this fails, he looks down and mutters: "I'm sorry, Colette. Je suis désolé."

Colette sucks in her breath, moving away from the grass, and puts a hand on his shoulder. She takes his glasses off and wipes them on her blouse. "Mon cher, va mourir le chat dans le cadre?"

He looks at her, unable in this moment to understand French, struggling to pronounce *what*, "quoi?"

She says more slowly, "va mourir le chat dans le cadre?"

Erwin Shrödinger hears it this time, *will the cat die in the box?* He sits up, "Colette, I apologize. I have been ridiculous. Je t'aime."

Colette smiles, "Je t'aime, aussi. Et le chat?"

"Well, you see, that's the thing about this experiment. Assuming that the photon is either a particle or a wave, there is a fifty/fifty probability that the cat will live and a fifty/fifty probability that the cat will die. We cannot see the cat, so we cannot know the fate until the box is open." Erwin Shrödinger demonstrates by lifting up the basket. Colette obligingly

stares at the apple, blinking twice then turning to him. "When we observe photons, we see either a wave or a particle, but the nature of the photon is dependent on what we are looking for. Therefore, when we open the box, we see either a dead or live cat. The cat lives or dies in the observation, and it is the act of observing that in and of itself makes it so! *Chacun son gout!*"

"Moreover, if we abandon the idea that the photon must be a particle or a wave, and we accept that it is both, then the cat is both alive and dead. You see?" Erwin Shrödinger claps his hands together, overturning the basket.

"Mais, mon cher, c'est impossible. Un chat doit etre vivre o mort. Il n'est pas etre le deux."

Erwin Shrödinger nods at her protests, which would be the same as Einstein's years later, *but, my dear, it's impossible. A cat must be alive or dead. It cannot be both.*

Ellen Engel does not sleep on Saturdays, but John does not know this. At midnight, she will crawl out of their bed, tuck him back in, and tiptoe past the crib to the study. Then, she will pull out her legal pad and a pencil to start the formula. This Saturday is no different, Ellen Engel is in the study, balancing equations and sketching graphs in the margin of the yellow paper.

On these nights, Erwin usually comes in around one, and although she anticipates his arrival, she is no less annoyed by his presence.

"Ellen, when will you rest?" Erwin pulls up a chair to sit next to her and as usual takes the fourth A book from her neat stacks.

"I'm busy, Erwin. And keep your voice down ... the baby."

"You don't give a shit about that baby," he chides, not actually sounding upset, just amused.

"I love my child," Ellen protests, erasing column four of her formula. She has set up  $y$  as a function of  $x$  wherein

you must divide by  $x$  but  $x$  could only equal zero. She curses, "damn it. Damn it."

"Oops ... dividing by zero always makes it so messy?"

Erwin smirks, "isn't that the first thing you learned in algebra."

"I'm perfectly aware of the laws, thank you."

Erwin opens *Another Animal Dies: Liberation and Rights* and says nothing.

"Could you not read here, please," she says.

Erwin ignores her.

Ellen leans over her equation, shielding it from him with her left elbow. She moves the numbers to the other column and starts over. An hour passes. She does not look up to see if he is still there reading. She pauses for a moment, feeling a swell of brilliance over the outcome of the proof in column two.

"Ceci ne la rapportera pas encore," he says quietly.

"I don't speak French, Erwin. You know that."

"It translates in Hungarian to this again it will not her bring another time. Or German to this not will her bring again back. Interestingly enough, in Polish the *la* will have to be neuter, so she might not even have been a she."

Ellen hates when he does this.

"It will not bring her back, little Ellen Engel."

Her shoulders stiffen, and her right hand begins to shake uncontrollably. "How dare you, Erwin Shrödinger." She puts her left hand over her right one, trying to calm it down. "How dare you."

"There are three things I regret and cannot change. One of them has to do with a birthday party in 1915. One of them is incidental to our conversation but involved my mother's best friend. The last one, is of course, that I missed the train to see Colette off in Vienna when she was going back to Paris. At the time, I was going to give a presentation to my university. Colette and I would see each other again in three weeks, and she told me not to bother. I spent a lot of time in

the state of not bothering, probably a high probability, probably fifty/fifty." Erwin puts the Animal Liberation book down, taking off his glasses and wiping them on his shirt. The movement reminds him of her, and he begins to cry softly, moving his face so his tears won't hit Ellen's graph paper.

"I wouldn't mind if you cried on my paper, Erwin," she says, putting her left hand out towards him, but stopping half way.

"Yes you would, Ellen," he smiles.

"You're right," she frowns, her brow wrinkling in concentration as she tries to remember what happened on the train to Paris. "It wasn't on the train?"

"No, a car, later on. It hardly matters now; it's been decades." Erwin straightens up and puts the fourth A book back in its proper place. He gets up to leave, because it is five in the morning.

"Erwin?"

"Yes?"

"It does matter." Ellen closes her notebook. She has always felt inadequately prepared to deal with death and the social expectations that surround it, but she manages a quick, stiff hug. "I'm sorry for your loss."

"And I for yours."

Ellen Engel has told many lies to John, among them that she dated other men before him. She has systematic name-changing system to keep all the women straight. She takes the last two letters of the woman's name and makes them the first two letters of the imaginary man: Susan is Anthony, Hope is Peter, Teresa is Sam. (As a joke, but not a funny one, Marisol has always been Erwin.)

There are three things that Ellen Engel regrets and cannot change. One is from first grade when she agreed with Susan Willacker and Karen Oliver that Martin Frankel was retarded and quite possibly a homo. The second is telling

Marisol she could go to hell and never call again and that would make Ellen Engel the happiest girl in the world. The third is hanging up on Marisol after saying that.

On Sunday mornings, she lays in bed for hours, thinking about those last two regrets and about the two semesters of psychoanalytic theory she had in undergrad. Ellen Engel does not think that she loved women because her dad died when she was younger. She does not think she would rather have a penis. She does not think that Marisol's death made her afraid of women. John never asks her why she will not get out of bed on Sunday. Although she has told him the story about Marisol, she called her, "a friend".

Erwin Shrödinger wore a black suit to Colette's funeral. He sat in the front, next to her family and counted the pews over and over. He tried to remember his favorite hymn and took the square root of the number of black shoes in the fourth row. Erwin Shrödinger held Colette's mother and tried to avoid translating everything the priest said in his head. He would not make her death into an equation.

Ellen Engel wore a black dress to Marisol's funeral. The same black dress she would wear to four more funerals before graduate school. It is a variation of the dress she wore as a child to her father's funeral, but she does not remember this, nor would she think it important. She picked the dress out on sale at Mervyns two days before.

Ellen Engel is in her study, thinking about that dress. It is another Saturday at midnight, and she stares at the new row of A's. She picks up the fourth book, *Animé: a twenty-year retrospective*, and places it next to her. Erwin is early tonight. He notes that she has moved the fourth book and raises an eyebrow.

"It's just so you won't nag me," Ellen mumbles, getting her

graph paper out and beginning to work. "Just don't talk tonight. I had a long week."

Erwin nods, sitting down in his chair to her left and opening the book. She gets all the way to the last moment of the proof and once again her  $y$  must divide by zero, "well, shit."

"Shhh ... the baby," Erwin jokes. Ellen laughs and then shows him the equation. He shakes his head, "pity that one looked promising."

Ellen goes back to writing, but her right hand has begun to shake. Moments pass in silence. Ellen works the theorem another way, but still ends up with dividing by zero. She crosses out the fourth column; she checks to see that she counted the remainder. She frantically makes another graph. Ellen has known her whole adult life that you cannot divide by zero; she remembers her eighth grade algebra teacher writing it on the board and leaving it there for the whole year. Now her right hand is shaking so hard that she cannot write—all her X's are deformed and elongated.

"It won't bring her back, Ellen Engel. Even if the cat does not have to die, even if you change the rules of quantum reality, even if your wave is always a wave, she is dead."

"Then, what good? What can come of it all, Erwin Shrödinger?" She yells, loud enough to wake John, loud enough to wake the baby. She cannot move.

"Admit that she didn't die in a car crash."

"What are you talking about?" Ellen whispers, unable to look him in the eye, pushing her pencil into her palm.

"She didn't die in a car crash."

"Of course she did. Don't be absurd, Erwin."

"Come on, Ellen. You know this. She killed—"

"No."

"She killed herself—"

"After I hung up the phone." Ellen slumps down in her chair. "I can't prove that the cat will be alive, can I?"



"I'm sorry." Erwin reaches out to her shoulder, pulling her towards him. "I'm so very sorry."

Sunday, Ellen Engel wakes up early, chuckling when she surprises John. She picks up the baby and heads towards the green bathroom.

"I'll do the bath today, John."

He looks at her, and she nods, "it's ok, John. Really."

"Ok, then, I'll go start breakfast." He gives her a quick hug and goes to the kitchen.

She starts the water running, testing the heat with her hand, and waiting for the tub to fill. When the temperature is perfect, she puts the infant gently in the water, laughing as the baby splashes around.

"John! I think the baby's a swimmer!" Ellen Engel calls to the kitchen. She hears John laugh and yell back, "is there a mess already?"

She nods, even though he can't see her, and scoops up water to pour over the child.

"Where's the baby soap?" she shouts to John, remembering that he got a special kind to help with diaper rash.

"In the cabinet under the sink, next to the toothpaste."

She turns around to grab the soap from the cabinet. It is between a fresh tube of Aquafresh and a silver hairdryer. She picks up the yellow soap bar, and starts to turn around. She stops.

She is facing away from the tub, unable to move. Ellen Engel's baby is in the white bathtub, and there is a fifty/fifty probability that the baby has drowned while she was getting the soap. There is also a probability that the baby is existing in a simultaneous dead/alive state which would explain why Ellen Engel cannot hear the baby or the water or even her own breath.

If she turns around, the baby will die in the observation. And she understands.

This is her theorem; she has solved the formula. The soap slips out of her hands, but she doesn't hear it hit the floor. She will not make her baby into an equation. She cannot turn around. She starts to cry, giant wails shaking her body; her right hand begins to spasm. With her left hand, she sketches  $y^2$ , divided by the square root of  $n$ , setting it equal to  $x$  over two times  $n$ , divided by  $q^2$ . She cannot turn around.

## *Second Place*

### New Story By Marla Johnson

#### Chapter One

"It's not an evil thing," she said as she pulled on her pendent.

I took a glance at the symbol, a silver pentagram, dangling from her neck then turned my eyes back to her bark colored eyes.

"Phila, we don't worship the devil or anything. Our horned god represents the animal side of nature. After all we are based on Earth."

I let my hand rest on my book as I quickly glanced around the library. No one was around, not even the librarian. She was probably on her smoke break.

"We are pantheist."

"Pantheist?" I asked as I drew my elbows on the table.

"Yes, we believe god is found in everything."

"Even our self?"

"Yes, we even accept the fact that many things are beyond our comprehension. The center is positive thought and behavior, so you see it's not an evil thing."

I smiled softly.

"I never said it was, in fact I find it interesting."

"You should join us, just once, to see if you like it. You know it's great for the restoration of women."

"I don't believe..."

"What do you believe?" interjected Atlanta.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I don't find myself being dedicated to an organized religion. I like the principles of the Natives actually. I like to be in nature and to respect and to listen to her, but I can't confine her in some organization. Sometimes I feel like I am

the only one who can feel her."

"But you're not," she said sternly.

"I know but it feels like it."

She smiled slightly.

"What are you without faith? Do you have one?"

Atlanta smiled and picked up her books.

"I have to go. It's a full moon."

"When do you want to meet again?"

"Monday?"

I nodded my head and watched as Atlanta flew down the aisle. I smiled slightly as I gathered my books then headed up the second floor. Was faith embedded in religion? I had faith in many things but not in the usual god or religion. Was this a new trial? At first it had been my quest for my identity but I came to the startling realization I was searching for something that was not lost. It was a waste of time. I had finally come to some realization that the masks I wore were in fact my identity. When I tried to go in search for me I found I did a horrible job. The beginning was a vortex, the self, now it was the soul; if it wasn't one thing it was another. Now it was religion, but hadn't it always been religion and the self, the soul and the saved. For me though I saw Christmas as a snow flaked day, football, decorations, putting up the tree, mom's favorite cinnamon buns and hot chocolate and presents; Thanksgiving was a dump truck of food, football, shrimp or fried rice, cool air, family and the gravy oh the gravy so good; New Years my neighbors tried to get me drunk, the late night of stars and family; Halloween brought images of dark streets, candy and the fantastic mental mood of creative conception and design; Dios de los Muerto I could actually celebrate death not fear it, but mostly I like the skeletons, flowers and especially the pan dulce; Easter was close to my birthday, filled with pastels. Such things did not fill me with religious remembrance or piety but rather nature did. I could have been a nihilist but I had too much passion. I smiled

comically and freely; no one was there and I directed myself in a row of shelves filled with musty books. There was something fulfilling about the library, perhaps there was a sexual undertone hidden in the creaseless papers, hard covered books, the odd old smell creating a fragrance of education, knowledge of self awareness. The endless parallel shelves filled with books; I could dream and discovery in here or out there because of them. I was able to move freely, visible or transparently, as if a draft was creeping up stairs. The more I thought about it the more I was able to recognize there was some sexual tension within the library, perhaps it was the dreams that were invented and fulfilled inside those walls.

My eyes were raised as a gangly boy walked by. He smelt good. A dusky cologne. He smiled politely and I gave an awkward glance of acknowledgement. I did not get any studying done with Atlanta; my research for my final project was obliterated in the thought of music. Why didn't the library play Metallic or Rage or Cypress Hill? I could see myself thrashing or bobbing my head while dancing through the aisles. All eyes would be on me. I smiled slightly as I pulled out a book on modern rock, what I needed was a book on punk rock, preferable the British punk movement. I pulled out a few books nestled them in my arms then exited the aisles and headed back downstairs. I checked them out, placed them in my bag and headed out. It was pass ten. I hated my roommate and despised the thought of entering my room to see her there, but when I got back to my room, it was dark and cool. She was not there and I felt happy. I turned on the TV and the radio then started my nightly regime that ended with washing my face, brushing my teeth and emptying the bladder. I got undressed, redressed then slid into bed, got cozy and fell asleep to Conan O'Brien with a huge smile on my face.

## Chapter Two

"I love smoking out everyday."

I let my body stay still on the bed. Another bullshit Friday.

"Wanna drink?" I asked.

"Four twenty everyday."

I looked at Auge. He was lost in thought, sweet dreams of drugged fantasy. It was my duty to wake him.

"Auge," I said.

I stopped, thought, and then readjusted my ears.

"Auge," I repeated.

I was right the first time. His name was a mere sound.

"Auge, ugh, agh, agg."

Sounds of disdain and disgust. I smiled slightly then looked at him. His glass eyes were staring at me. I frozen for a second stuck in a void of inane thought.

"Do you want a drink?" I asked, "I don't mind contributing to the delinquency of a minor."

"What?"

I shook my head.

"You're not twenty-one," I said as I pulled out a beer from my cubed fridge.

"Forget age."

"What about wine?" I mocked, "Age is important for wine."

"Fuck wine."

"So you are not a fine wine, then you can have all the beer you want."

I handed him the beer and he quickly twisted the cap and chugged it down in one long gulp.

"Another?"

I smiled slightly and gave him another.

"I would love to see you fucked up. You'd be so mellow."

"But I already am."

"Yeah, but you'd be like dude, cool and groovy."

He smiled to himself as if he told a secret joke between

him and his self. I stared at him and waited a second.

"I'm already like that."

"Yeah, but you'd be on drugs."

What was it with drugs? I could never quite understand that mystified substance on the verge of tangibility and invisibility. It was alluring, the thought of it, the ability to get away from it all, but I had invented my own heroin or pot in the form of flexi-moldable clay of dreams and imagination. Sure it didn't lift me to physical mountains, but my mentality and creativity was able to soar, I could fly in my mind and I didn't have to worry when I fell. I had done it again. I had left the room while Auge was still there. I turned my eyes back to Auge who was now laying on my bed. I let my back slip down the wall so that I was half-propped up on my elbow and half leaning in Auge's space.

"It's Friday."

I paused and looked at him.

"It's suppose to be some big thing, Friday."

I looked at the clock.

"It's early yet it's already late. We gotta go. We can go to the club and party."

"There's a party in the club?"

Auge popped his head slightly up. I nodded my head.

"Cool, let me just finish this beer and let me get a few drags before we go."

I let the beer disappear. I let Auge disappear so he could get a quick buzz. Then we headed down the stairs, pass the water fountain and into the club that sat below the campus cafeteria. Lights were dim, the smell of moist dancers and faded visions laid on the walls and the floor. I let myself into the club. A large group was dancing, banging around as ten or fifteen people leaned on the slick wall. They were mostly boys watching the girls dance, gyrate, while checking out those who came in. I hid and walked swiftly in front of Auge. The lights flickered, the black light illuminated Auge's white

spiked hair and his white shoes. My nails glowed as I let my arms move onto Auge's shoulders. I let him move his hands on to my hips, then to my lower back, close to my butt. We moved into each other then away. Grooving to the beat we changed moved around the room finding other random unknown people to dance with. It was an erotic display in some hidden culture. We were being watched, studied by the horny boys on the wall. They were fixtures, like stuffed animals plastered on a trophy wall. I could see them just as well as they could see me, in fact I could see them better, I could hide among the crowd.

Auge and I left after a few hours, found a friends room full of beer. Auge drank three more than we headed back to his room. We listened to Led Zeppelin as we both stared tiredly at one another. It was still early, not even two, and we were back in the same ditch. I am uncertain how it first happened. Who initiated the first move. It wasn't the first time, so it came as no shock, but we began to kiss. Long grappling kisses as if we were searching for something inside of the other. His hand began to move from my thigh to my butt. I let my fingers run through his hair then fall to his back. We began to grope, search for physical pleasure, but I only let us go so far, besides Auge smelt of beer and faint herbs. I left around two-thirty and got back to my room. My roommate was there, asleep; the room was dark and cool. I changed and slipped into bed letting my mind wander as I fantasize over Auge. If only he was... I stopped quickly. Did I want to change one of my closest friends? I thought about his eyes and his warm hands. His long kisses. He was a good kisser.

### Chapter Three

I was a feminist for a while. I was in the feminist majority leadership club for nearly five months. We had a candlelight vigil for the women in Afghanistan. We all held small white



candles that dripped wax on our hands as we walked across streets like a huge mob of fireflies. We even went to one of those press conferences where Jay Leno and his wife Mavis spoke. It was her show. She was the main speaker. There were other celebrities around, minor, but nonetheless known people. I actually got dressed up and got a picture with the Leno's and listen to a few celebrities talk in small groups. It was fun. Afterwards I was dropped off at the Hilton. My father was in town to visit me. It was a good day. I felt good. Anyways the club after winter break never resumed. The president was swamped with work and responsibilities and other things soon became more important.

I let my hand fall to my side. Then I picked it up again. It was dead. It dropped and I turned to my stomach. It was Saturday. One more day then back to class. I let out a sigh then listen to my roommate move around. She got up softly, got her shower caddy, bathrobe and towel then went to take a shower. Now I got up, turned on the radio and the TV. I felt my hand, stretched my arms and legs, then sat down at my table; picking up a book I stared at the silver cover then dropped it back down to the desk and turned off the radio. I went back to my bed, sat on it, letting the covers drape on me then looked at cartoons. Jackie Chan, X-Men and the Ripping Friends filled my eyes, then I took a shower at eleven-thirty. I got dress, had some oatmeal then sat back on my bed. I could clean, do homework, work on my paper, go to the library, but all that appeared lackluster. I wanted to have a memory today. Something fulfilling to sustain me for the upcoming week. I let my mind wander. I knew this was just wasting time, but I could not help it. I liked those moments of blank space that filled the air. I looked out towards the window. It was red leafs, a light sky, almost blue, and a swift crisp air. I let my hand drip down through the air. The sparkling sun glittered through the windows and I let myself fall off into an imagined sea. Floating alone on a few pieces

of wood tied together by seaweed. I smiled then continue. An island could be seen poking out from the water. A bird passing by left a trail of birdseed yet I did not want to come inland. I wanted a houseboat, just in case I had to leave. In an outlet a waterfall splashed onto me, sinking my makeshift raft. I walked through and left the image, the idea and found myself in bed with a sexy man, well cut into muscle and flesh. A white smile of squares as we began to move into one another. He hands touch my Bermuda Triangle. I was waiting and then he finally moved... no I stopped my dream. I had too much to do. I got up picked up my book, the one with the silver cover. I had papers, books and that was not a part of life. I had to get through all the bureaucracy before I could get to life, living and all that.

I had done well. Read the book and finished it, typed more of my paper and even cleaned my room. Everything was done. I was done for today. I could start to move forward. I had made plans to hang out with Bassy and Vinia. We were going to a movie, but instead we ended up at Burger King, then to a bar for a quick drink. I had a margarita then we went to the movie, a comedy. We laughed more than usual then headed back to campus. At the water fountain we stopped and took a seat on the wooden benches. We did not talk but looked at each other with comical faces.

"Well," said Bassy, "what now?" "It's only eleven."

"We could go back to my room," Vinia said as she looked at us, "got some drinks."

Saturday Night Live was coming on soon. I wanted to laugh again.

"Hey Vinia remember that woman? That Mary Catherine Gallagher."

She perked up started to talk, rambling, then bounced up.

"Dude, she's so fucking funny."

Bassy looked at us. We both had watched the special and were pulled into laughter. We had an inside joke.

"Molly Shannon," we both yelled as if we were in choir.

"Shall we go?" I asked as I looked at them.

Bassy didn't look interested.

"I rather sit here for awhile."

I nodded my head.

"Yar," I said, "I'm going up. Come to visit if you want."

I left them two to chat. I ran up the hundred some stairs and let my legs fall onto the bed as I got in. My roommate wasn't here and I suddenly remembered she was out in the desert or something for a class. I let out relief as I focused my eyes to the screen. I realized I did not hate her, in fact I did not dislike her, she was just irritating, bold in her thoughts and overwhelming. I could suffocate around her, but I did not want to kill or injure her. I did not hate her, she just annoyed me and when people did that it was hard for them to fall back into my graces. A knock exploded, then in came Auge followed by Vinia.

"Look who I found," Auge said.

They both sat on my bed, Auge and Vinia drank a beer. We looked at the TV, busted into laughter, but we didn't talk. Then an hour later, they left, Auge smiled at me. I knew he would be back after a few hits on Vinia's bong. It was an hour later when Auge came back. He had had a shot of tequila too. He laid down then looked at me.

"Where's," he paused, "what's her name, your roommate?"

"In the desert or something like that."

"Cool," he said as he placed his hand on my back and began to rub softly. I wasn't in the mood and continue to look at TV. A comedy showcase came on and I lied down for a while. Auge kissed me and I kissed him back. I got up looked at the TV then moved to the door, turned off the light then went back to my bed. I laid my head on Auge's shoulder. He was half dazed, half asleep. I fell asleep and woke to the soft TV light. I got up looked out the window. It was

nearly five. I felt restless, but changed into my nightclothes, locked my door and squeezed under my covers. Auge awoke, shifted and moved but finally gave up as he twisted himself in my blanket. We fell asleep together and I awoke to find him on the floor with the blanket tangled around his waist and left leg. I smiled slightly. It was Sunday. Would my roommate be back soon? I didn't care and instead turned the TV off and went for a shower. It was late, the hall was quite and I enjoyed it, the water noise of a flowing fall. It was an hour shower and when I came back Auge was sitting on the edge of the bed. He looked haggard.

"I'm going to bed."

I nodded my head.

"Ok, I'll see you later."

He got up, wavered a little then went to the door. He stopped.

"Do you like me?"

I laughed.

"Of course."

He looked at me.

"No, do you like me?"

I did not answer. I knew what he meant. I pulled out a towel to pull the water from my thick hair.

"I don't know."

He did not look at me but left. I heard him mumble, "I know what that means."

## Chapter Four

What is Sunday but another tone of gray? I don't mind gray but it is a warning of the impending, the inevitable Monday. The highlight of Monday was my study meeting with Atlanta. All day through classes and at work while I tutored English I would think about Atlanta. Atlanta was an interesting girl to say the least, she encouraged me in conversation,

in talking in higher terms, to be more like breaking glass. I am not a socialite, gregarious or in anyway talkative around general people. However with Atlanta I found myself floating, perhaps that was why I had an image of the wind wrapping itself around me. But it was merely an image and I could not find words, so I sat in class and ignored the professor; moved on and ignored the next one. I was a professional. A distinguished one. Most students would talk lightly, pass notes and leave the professor without any encouragement. The professor would then linger there, waiting for an answer or hoping for a question. No one moved or made a pass at the image of a caring studious student. I would sit in the front in most classes, close to the door or to the wall, with a notebook, book and pen in hand and a look of knowledge. I would down notes and think profoundly when a question was proposed. It was an image only. I usually spent my time writing poems or parts of stories or segments of novels. I was a master at this; rarely being called on and when I was I knew a remark to add to push us forward, even though it was a small sentence I felt accomplish. This was class, this was what I learned: You can teach yourself so why go to school? Oh yes the diploma that praised and invaluable piece of paper. That's why.

"Hola Atlanta," I said stiffly, "como estas?"

I needed Spanish practice badly. I could write ok, decipher text well enough to get the meaning, but to speak it was different. Intimidation of the native speakers filled me with shame. I had studied the language for eight years yet I was elementary.

"Estoy bien," Atlanta flung back at me in a nice rounded accent.

"Come fue su fiesta?"

"Fiesta?"

"Si su fiesta," I stumbled then picked up a word, "la luna, yo recuerdo que tu tuve un rendezvous."

I smiled. Good old franish.

"Que lenguaje, what language did you add, French?"

She smiled and laughed.

"In high school I use to speak franglish. French Spanish and English."

Atlanta rolled her eyes comically.

"Comprendas?"

"Si, por supuesto."

Atlanta moved on.

"My fiesta o meeting was good. We had a ceremony. We had a new member join our circle."

I nodded my head.

"Y tu? Que fue su fin de semana?"

I wanted to think that one over. I smiled slightly to indicate I needed some time. How was my weekend? Normal? Yes. Boring, no. Well I had not talked to Auge nor had I talked to my closest friend Ruka. Had it been one week or two since we really talked. I hadn't even called my parents.

"Bien," I replied.

It had just hit me things were odd, different that the usual college life I had taken up. The past few months had been altered. My schoolwork, tutoring and friends had turned different, tarnished in a way. The boy, Auge had come in and invaded my senses. Atlanta had provoke a unlived life inside of me. No it was me, my exposure catalyzed me into a frenzied realm of passion for people; for life different to that of college. I was living differently and had left much of my life back. Was it a good change or dangerous? I could see above myself to figure it out. I had to keep moving forward. Find that key then I would know. I smiled then look at Atlanta.

"So will you?"

I looked at her dazed. My life was always changing, after all it is a part of life. There was that movement I had to explore before it was too late. I had to know what I was missing, if anything, before the real world opened up and

swallowed me.

"So will you?" repeated Atlanta.

"Sure," I replied unknowing what the question was.

Did it matter what she asked? Perhaps, but maybe not; maybe the question was in the answer.

## Chapter Five

Somehow I got myself invited to one of Atlanta's meetings as she called them, but it was more like seven women sitting around or standing while reading and performing ceremonies. I sat there as a pure observer. There was structure here too and I felt a uncomfortable feeling. I was not suppose to be here. I let my mind fall off into the brown cushion of the couch, down into the wood floor then way into the soil. It was dark; a cavern of sorts. Then I was walking in light. It could have been heavenly, but it was Ruka who had the light. She glowed purely. I walked into the light as I stood next to her. We did not speak but rather she analyzed me and I waited nervously for her approval.

"What have you done," she asked finally?

I could not tell her I have been out kissing a guy, touching him in places only a wife should. She was a devout Christian and one day she hoped I would find the light. I couldn't tell her I was hanging with Atlanta because she believed in Wicca. There were no devil worshipping, but she would still see it as wrong, the wrong path. Her way was right, but she was open, didn't mind the gays or other religions but held firmly to her belief. She was right morally spiritually and righteously. I could not say I had been drinking even though I was twenty-one and free and able. She saw alcohol as evil and feared I would become an alcoholic. Did she know my father drank beer like water, as the rest of my uncles did, and we were fine.? She didn't need to worry. I couldn't tell her I said fuck, hell, god dam or that my favorite word was shit.

She thought it was horrible, dirty and unnecessary. It couldn't tell her a damn thing, not because she would condemn me out loud, but I knew she would see me differently. At least I thought she would see me differently. I didn't want to disappoint her, but what about me? Couldn't I be me. No I couldn't, at least not around her. I couldn't tell her, so I walked away from the light, back into the dark hole of the cave and somehow made my way back through the soil, the wood floor up past the couch cushion and back inside myself. The ceremony left me feeling hollow near the end. I didn't remember what was occurring. What was this about? I left afterward, walked up to my room and found my roommate there. She smiled. I winced but it looked like a smile. I sat on my bed, turned the TV on then went to my desk and began to write. I stopped after an hour and looked up. My roommate was on her bed reading for class. She wasn't bad at all. I left my writing for the TV. Laying down I found myself humored as I was falling back into normalized routine, but then she talked to me.

"What kind of guys do you like? Or do you even like guys?"

I smiled.

"Yes I do," I said.

If she only knew the half of it I thought then continued.

"I like all kinds of guys, don't really have a type."

She nodded her head.

"Well what do you look for?"

I laughed.

"The same cliché stuff. You know good personality, a sense of humor and the ability to take me as is, because I am difficult. And if not I might end up killing him."

She laughed, smiled and let her head bounce around. Why was she asking me these questions? Why was I answering them so bluntly. No hiding, no lies, I just replied.

"You know that guy Jackson? He is cute. You should ask



him out."

I shook my head.

"He doesn't like me. Why would he like me?"

I didn't want her to answer.

"Why wouldn't he?"

I smiled and thought why shouldn't he. He was cute, athletic and had a nice polite demeanor. He was cute. Now I felt red. Why had she put this idea in my head? Change the subject I thought, but I couldn't. We continued to talk and I asked her to questions too. The conversation lasted for half an hour. The longest we ever talked.

## Chapter Six

I found him, Auge, sitting on his bed. His roommate was gone. I found myself distraught not about us, but about him. What was he thinking and how could I be nice to him? What I had wanted was something, but was it this? I wanted something different that was all, a little fun and sex (well at least as close as I could go) and that was all. He was a friend, safe and well liked. That was all but I couldn't tell him that. It was too blunt. Too mean, but it was the truth. I looked at him smiled and bounced around the room looking to see where he was at, what mood he was in. He smiled right away and I felt safe, so I took a seat on his bed.

"What are you up to?" I asked.

"Nothing, just thinking about this project for business."

I nearly burst. I had not worked on my project. I was behind. I had never been behind before. I would have to go to the library and I almost found myself aroused academically.

"How are you?" I asked, looking to see if he was still mad or thinking about "us."

"Good," he said as he looked at me.

He shifted position placed his hand on my leg then smiled faintly.

"I know why you are here and it's cool. We're friends. I just felt more than you."

I felt appalled as if I was being placed in some category of users or takers.

"No," I said, "I like you, but not like that. I trust you and feel safe with you. That's why, but I don't think, no I know we would not work or be..."

I stopped. Was I making sense, rambling?

"Work? We are in college I don't expect us to work forever. I just like being with you."

I looked at Auge.

"We can be together as friends, but not in one of those relationships."

He nodded his head.

"It's all cool Phila."

He smiled. I smiled and I grabbed his hand that was on my thigh and pushed it away. Then out of a sudden declaration I kissed him. Then we stopped and I got up and left.

"This weekend we'll hang."

I nodded my head as I left.

"We'll always hang."

I had a smile as I breathed relief. It was late, but I went to Ruka's room. She was always up late. I jiggled the doorknob then went in. She was at her desk working or studying. I leaned over her and shook her shoulders.

"How you?" she said lightly, child-like.

"Good. And you?"

"Tired."

"Then go to bed."

"Can't got a paper due Monday and a midterm. I'll be up till three or maybe I'll pull an all nighter."

"That's not good for you."

This felt good. These were usual conversations, usual banter full of understood meaning with hidden context.

"Lunch tomorrow?" I asked.

"Sure," she said.

"What time?"

"After my prayer group, around twelve-thirty."

"Cool. Well just wanted to say hi. Think I am going to bed."

"No don't go. Stay?"

"Why?" I asked.

This was a ritual and in the end I would stay awhile longer. I sat down on her bed.

"How's life?" I asked.

"Good," she said in her sweet pepped up voice.

She typed inconsistently, stopping to think, to stare off into space or to procrastinate by writing e-mails. Our conversation was infrequently but it was natural to our common connection.

So, Ruka finally said, "What have you done?"

I perked up.

"What?"

"What have you done lately," she replied as she stared at the computer screen.

I smile as I laid on her bed and propped my legs up on her wall.



"Untitled Photograph" by Kristine Welter

First Year  
Writing Prize  
2002

## First Place

### Are You Turning White? By Casey Shoji

In the short-story "Carnival Queen" Terry, a Japanese-American girl, finds that being herself is the most difficult thing to do in Hawaii. The society Terry lives in considers "haole" features to be beautiful, but at the same time being too "haole" is unattractive. The Carnival Queen Contest Terry and her friend Sam enter acts as a balance between whiteness and yellowness in a community where the image of a perfect person is being hapa haole. The events puts the girls in a situation where they must decide between confronting being pawns in a context that they can't possibly win or rebelling against society's rules; either one will lead them to reinforce superiority over themselves.

The perfect girl in Hawaii: "tall and slim with light brown hair and butter frosting skin...smooth and gracefully quiet. Her smile is soft and shiny. It's like looking at a pearl" (Hara 270). Leilani Jones is the model for the most attractive race, the hapa haole. It's no hidden fact that Leilani will become the Carnival Queen because she is half-Caucasian and half-Japanese. The Carnival Queen is a fixed contest and only a mirage for the community to see girls dress up in formal attire and make believe that the winner (Leilani) isn't obvious. The participants of the event are the pride and joy of McKinley High School except the hapa girl who does nothing to benefit the school. Leilani is merely the beautiful hapa girl destined to be the Carnival Queen. "'We all know it,' says Sam, 'This is the only girl who can possible win'" (Hara 270). The Carnival Queen contest is a game of racial superiority, not a contest of who is prettier or who is smarter: whoever was born with preferred genes will make the perfect woman. A

beautiful girl like Terry has no chance to become the queen because her ethnicity is not the preferred racial blend.

Terry, confronted with this ethnic dilemma, can see the contest as a front to satisfy the community's need to see the "perfect" girl escorted by almost perfect students. Terry is frustrated with the fact that she is being stereotyped as being not "perfect" enough because of her ethnicity. She cannot escape the stereotyping of Japanese girls compared to hapa girls. Therefore, Terry uses hidden transcripts to show her resistance to a system that puts girls in a box of do's and don'ts. Japanese girls have to look and act a certain way and never quite live life free from their mothers' and grandmothers' wishes. During the make up session, Terry is disgusted when putting on moisturizer to correct the "sallow" or yellow undertones on her face and acts like she will be sick. Terry resents the fact that she has to change her physical features to look like a haole.

Terry just wants to act like herself, not some fake person everyone expects her to be. "Why can't you just like me ... I thought you were my friend because you just like ME," (Hara 274) Terry asks her friend Sam. Still, Sam looks up to Terry because she was "the only Japanese girl that was perfect enough to win" (Hara 274). Sam does not see that this contest is for the community to idealize hapa women because it's the balance to what people see on television and what they encounter at home. Lani represents the ideal racial blend because people see her beauty through images: from the mainland and in the islands.

Since the islands are a minority-majority state, there are many Asian people on television and in the newspapers, yet the mainland influences cannot be ignored. The media, with all its perceptions of Western beauty is forged into the minds of local girls, and this has developed into the concept that being hapa is being beautiful. In Hawaii's social hierarchy, Asian influence is very dominant in the society where the

majority is Asian and Pacific Islander, ethnically. Yet, the mainland or haole influences affect the culture tremendously through magazines, television, and other events. People in the islands see the haole, skinny girl with the handsome guys through the media and they strive to portray this image. As Sam describes her teachers in the story, "I guess they're tired of looking like us; musubi bodies, daikon legs, furoshiki shaped home-made dresses" (Hara 273). This culture clash is seen everyday with girls wishing they had longer legs, skinnier torsos and double eyelids. In the story, the girls also use scotch tape to develop double eyelids, which present a whiter image.

The issue of either trying to become whiter or staying yellow is now confronted by Terry and Sam. Still, they can't fight the system of racial superiority that the contest represents without losing their social standing at school and the respect of their parents. Society will only let hapa girls win the contest, and Terry can see the fallacy behind the contest more than Sam can. Terry refuses to let herself become a pawn of the event, knowing she cannot win because she is not the "perfect" girl everyone imagines her to be. Terry is comfortable with who she is: a young, pretty, Japanese girl. Dropping out of the contest shows some resistance to the system of classification, but in the end only reinforce that they are inferior to hapa haole girls. Sam and Terry are stuck in a catch-22 situation where they cannot fully show their hate for the contest without losing some respect and love from their peers and the adults.

The culture clash of being white or yellow has been going on in Hawaii for years. Girls try to look prettier by putting on more make-up or having cosmetic surgery done to them. My prom date looked white as a ghost when I picked her up, but under all that make-up she was still a beautiful and stunning Japanese girl. Society and the media manipulate perceptions of beauty that people try to emulate. In the end, it is a no-win



situation because people have their own perception of what beauty is, and you cannot change the majority's image of the "perfect" woman. Still, in Sam and Terry's case, they realize that you do not have to change your image to become beautiful; you are already beautiful in someone else's eyes.

## Second Place

### All My Relations By Andrea García

With each passing mile a new landscape reveals itself on the canvas called my window. The parched and cracked desert of Nevada eventually gives way to the crimson rock of Arizona, which contrasts with the deep blue sky and puffy white clouds. Red towering mountains surround the Utah road on either side, while the flat Wyoming terrain seems to reveal the entire state. The Black Hills of South Dakota aren't exactly black, but are so dense with pine and spruce, that they let in little sunlight. Finally, the big sky and swaying prairie grass of North Dakota welcomes all. Holding together these vastly different terrains is a continuous network of asphalt roads.

As we pull onto the dirt road and our windshield is splattered by a fresh layer of bug guts, that's when I know we're not part of this great web of asphalt anymore. In fact, we are so far removed from "civilization" that the radio no longer works and all I can see on the canvas of my window is a sea of prairie grass. It undulates with the breeze, and, like the ocean, it causes me to draw in a deep breath. Is it the fragrant wind, the thinner air at this elevation, or is it a breath of relaxation? I slyly glance at my mom, then at my two aunts. They all have the same distant looks in their eyes. The only sounds we hear are the rocks under the car from the dirt road and the chorus of grasshoppers welcoming us into their home. It seems as if the "Fort Berthold Reservation" sign creates an invisible line on the land as the once flat, calm sea of prairie grass turns into an ocean of golden rolling hills. We are home.

It's about 9 p.m. in North Dakota, and the sun is barely

beginning to set. We've joined the others at camp, and even though we haven't seen each other in a year, our excitement and greetings are overtaken by the beauty of the moment. Our camp is set up on a hill: to the west we overlook Lake Sakakawea, and to the east the fragrant hills roll into the changing horizon. I watch the thin featherlike clouds turn pink, then red, then develop a silver lining against the darkening sky. The crickets and mosquitoes greet the night with a song, and we finally greet each other.

I don't know if it's the serenity of the atmosphere, or the reverence we have for the land that our ancestors once stood on, but every year we meet, we grow closer to each other and to the land. Here at our annual ceremony, we are not known as Ron, the carpenter from Wisconsin, or Stacie, the executive from L.A.. We get to know each other by helping one another cook, setting up camp, chopping wood for the fire that must be kept for four days, and by learning who the good hunters are that will kill the deer for our feast. There is an unspoken code of conduct and respect that no one dares to test. Within each individual resides an inherent reverence that supercedes the need for any written rules. When we are here, we humble ourselves to the land, giving up modern conveniences and basic necessities. We are completely vulnerable to the elements as we sleep under the sky, go barefoot, and eat what is in the ground. We pray together, cry together, and rejoice together. That is the way in which we are connected to the land. That is the way that we are connected to each other. When we are here at Sundance, we are a *tioshpa*, a family.

And so the routine goes every year on the first day that we all sit around the fire and catch up. As the drum group sings ancient songs, our hearts are in tune and connected by the steady beat. The drum is our heartbeat. Our eyes are captivated by the fire, and our thoughts are connected by the small crooked strings of smoke. We listen to the old ones

speaking late into the night. When we finally go to bed, few of us choose to sleep in our tents. The air is warm and smells of sweet grass, and the earth is soft beneath us. We don't use sleeping rolls because we want to be close to Mother Earth. It is only here that I don't feel the need to be trapped under thick blankets, because I feel secure with the beautiful blanket of stars above me. Shooting stars trail across the black sky every few minutes. The mystery of the Northern Lights reveal the path to Heaven with a long, white, almost ghost-like trail that seems to touch the earth yet also floats in the black abyss of the night sky.

I notice, then, that everything we do is in a circle. The stars are round, the sky is round, and we now know that the earth is round and even makes a revolution around the sun. Just as the eagle builds his nest in a circle, we make our earth lodges in circles. Just as the seasons go in a great cycle and inevitably end up where they started, so do our lives. We start off as children, and our children eventually take care of us as we once took care of them. Just as I go to bed having made this realization, I wake up on the next day to be taught a similar lesson. One of the spiritual leaders takes us to an old camp to show us herbs. Walking among old tipi rings marked by circles of rocks, he tells us that everything on this earth has a purpose, and for every disease God has made a cure. Since everything was made by the Creator, everything is sacred. Each time, then, that we take something from the land, we give a small offering of tobacco. Whatever we take, we give something back to acknowledge our coexistence and gratitude. Once again, I am compelled to draw in a deep breath.

Yet, this momentary realization is quickly stifled as we make our way home. Just as abruptly as the smog coming down the Cajon Pass shocks my lungs, and I have a bird's eye view of this cement jungle we call civilization, my urban instincts return. Rolling smog takes the place of the sea of

prairie grass, and car exhaust is mistaken for clouds. Having just had the authentic experience of Nature, I can't help but chuckle at a billboard I see for Disneyland and realize how manufactured our lives really are. *Have you ever heard the dogs cry to the sirens of the night, or asked the grinning homeless man why he grins? You can yell with all the voices of rush hour, and you can actually smell the colors of the wind.* Despite the change of scenery, and the change of paradigms, for that matter, this land is not as desolate as it sounds. It is the land of opportunity. It is the land of hope. Having a place like North Dakota, though, creates a balance, and gives me spirituality where skyscrapers and tons of cement lack. The land and Nature of North Dakota is a constant reminder of God. He speaks through the wind, through the crickets, through the stars, and always reminds us that everything is connected. Yet, living in the city is not the desolate wasteland I once thought it to be. While it is easy to get caught in the vortex of materialism, politics, and over-indulgence, one can easily see the beauty of learning trust, charity, humanity, discipline, and the reality of modern times. Here, I gain knowledge and peace-of-mind. I have the opportunity to learn about many facets of life and, thus, become more connected to humanity. I realize that Mitakuye Oyasin, all my relations, means more than just my tioshpa at Sundance. It means all things that God has created. Welcome to our second home.

## Third Place

### Thoreau's Needs Compared to My Own By Katie Hunter

Just as a stream that begins as a small trickle slowly gains momentum and strength as it moves downward until it becomes a fast paced rapid, I've begun to realize that my life is moving along at a faster and faster pace. It seems like it was only yesterday that I was petrified about starting the seventh grade, then came high school, and here I am today, a freshman in college. Before I know it, this particular experience will be over and I will be forced out into the "real world." For this reason, I believe that it is an important thing to begin to examine the beliefs that I have become a part of me these past eighteen years. As I was reviewing those things that Thoreau deems necessary, I came to realize that there were many things that the two of us have in common. Thoreau's book *Walden* is about the two years that he spent living in a cabin on Walden Pond attempting to survive on his basic needs. I then asked myself the question, "what are my basic needs?" While initially Thoreau and I share many of the same needs, like the four basic needs, freedom and time, some soon begin to differ in their degree of importance in our lives until, eventually, I discover several needs, such as relationships, education and music, that are completely separate from Thoreau's.

At the outset of his book *Walden*, Thoreau describes needs that I share in both name and degree of importance in our lives. The main set of needs that Thoreau classifies as basic are "food, clothing, shelter, fuel." Thoreau believes that "not till we have secured these are we prepared to entertain the true problems of life with freedom and a prospect of success" (Thoreau, 11). I myself could survive with these

basic elements alone, yet I do not believe that they would make me happy and fulfilled. I have, therefore, other needs that I deem necessary to my happiness. Thoreau relied on other needs as well, and it is for this reason he explained that when a person "has obtained those things which are necessary to life, there is another opportunity to obtain the superfluities; and that is, to adventure on life now.." (14). In order to "adventure on life now," one of the necessities that must be available for me is freedom.

Thoreau and I are both dependent upon several different forms of freedom. The first of these forms is freedom from joyless and crushing obligation. Thoreau explained it by saying that "the laborer's day ends with the going down of the sun, and he is then free to devote himself to his chosen pursuit, independent of his labor" (63); yet, Thoreau continues, "his employer, who speculates from month to month, has no respite from one end of the year to another" (63). Much like Thoreau, I want to have freedom from the obligation of what others want of me so that I may be free to live life for myself, independent of the concern of living for others. Just as a stream is not truly free if a man has constructed a dam to block it, so too do I feel my path obstructed when there are too many of other's obligations to fulfill. I want to escape from the path of "the mass of men who lead lives of quiet desperation" (7). In order to do so, I need not only a certain amount of freedom from obligation, but also enough freedom in society so that I am able to pursue my goals unhindered.

Thoreau believed that when these types of freedom can be attained they lead a person to be free to fulfill his or her own genius. Thoreau explained that "little is to be expected of that day, if it is to be a called a day, to which we are not awakened by our genius" (50). When it comes to discovering one's genius, I, like Thoreau, am convinced that it is important to live deliberately, because that is what enables one to fulfill one's genius. Thoreau "went to the woods because he

wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if [he] could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when [he] came time to die, discover that [he] had not lived" (81). I believe that it is important for me in my life to live each day with the intent of getting something from it. Whether that "something" be knowledge, love understanding, laughter, or merely a deeper appreciation for my life, in the end, "I [do] not wish to live what [is] not life" (81).

In order to live life to the fullest, the necessity of time is needed. Time is the final need that Thoreau and I have exactly in common. Yet, when dealing with the aspect of time, it becomes evident that the time required in today's society is different in several ways from the time essential during Thoreau's era. During the time of Thoreau in the last century, life may have gone by just as quickly as today, but the pressures of achieving so many things at once and fulfilling numerous roles have drastically increased. Although what each society needed to accomplish with its time is different, it remains a great luxury for both periods. Thoreau refers to time as "but a stream [he] goes a-fishing in. [He] drinks at it but while [he] drinks [he] sees the sandy bottom and detects how shallow it is...but eternity remains" (88). I constantly hear the phrase that the day had not enough hours in it for everything to be accomplished. I believe that this sentiment relates to humans' need for time in order to fulfill their genius and thus find happiness in life. I am in accordance with Thoreau's sentiment that "we should be blessed if we lived in the present always and took advantage of every accident that befell us.." (280). It is important to take advantage of the time allotted to us and make the most of it. This philosophy of living has not changed so drastically in the past century and a half, merely the number of things that must be accomplished. However, this concept of having more to do in today's society does not change the fundamental needs that both Thoreau and I have; it simply changes some of the



dynamics surrounding the fulfillment of these needs.

Simplicity is one of the best examples of a need that differentiates between the two eras. Both Thoreau and I agree simplicity is essential and a means to achieving the ultimate freedom. "Men have come to such a pass that they frequently starve, not for want of necessities, but for want of luxuries; and I know a good woman who thinks that her son lost his life because he took to drinking water only" (55). People have always tended to desire more than is truly necessary for a happy existence. Both Thoreau and I share the opinion that often, these extras can get in the way of the truly important things in life. Society today is more consumed by materialism and the desire for better technology more than any other society in history. Sadly, we as a society have come to believe it necessary to have the latest technology and numerous material possessions in order to survive. That is not to say that Thoreau's own society was not without its own problems with materialism. The difference is that today there is a greater quantity than ever of such items deemed "necessary" for survival. The fact is that these items often deemed essential merely offer more convenience. For this reason, it is difficult to determine exactly how many material things are necessary to survive and live in happiness as compared to the number in Thoreau's society. However, I know that in my life I do not want to be burdened down like the allegory from Pilgrim's Progress by too many material things and ties to society. In this respect, I am exactly the same as Thoreau, who proclaimed that he did "not wish to be any more busy with hands and feet than is necessary. [His] head is hands and feet" (88). We both believe that simplicity is a means to concentrating more fully on those things that are truly important in life and not to be distracted by too much frivolity. The differences that arise in this particular need lead to more differences in other similar needs.

Thoreau and I both have certain intangible needs that are

similar in name, yet different in how we attempt to attain them and their significance to us. The first such intangible need is nature in our lives. Although I am appreciative of all forms of nature, there are certain forms that affect me more, they make up a part of who I am. The majestic mountains, enchanted forests and flowing rivers are beautiful and breathtaking, but it is the ocean that I need. I desire the uninhabited, uninterrupted beauty and wildness that only the sea offers me. By breathing its moist salt air deep into my lungs, I feel it is one of the ways that I feel that I can experience freedom. It is one of the means by which I experience God in my life. Yet, even more than I do, Thoreau had a deep rooted desire to be in and experience nature. The nature that Thoreau treasured most was found in the mountains, in the rugged woods and by the shores of peaceful lakes. In nature, Thoreau was able to experience truth and God. In nature, he wondered "what at such times are histories, chronologies, traditions and all written revelations" (277)? This need for nature that both of us have segues into our separate needs for God in our lives.

While Thoreau's need for God is fulfilled in nature, mine is partially realized there but also in other forms as well. The way that Thoreau experiences God is through watching and experiencing the wonder found only in nature. To Thoreau, "thus it seemed that this one hillside illustrated the principle of all the operations of nature. The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf" (275). In nature, Thoreau needed "no stronger proof of immortality" (282). While all of this holds true for me as well, there are other ways that I experience God. The first and most important of these methods is through my church, an organized community. At my church, when the hymns are being sung with the majesty of the organ, when the light streams through the stained glass windows as the incense is rising up to the heavens, at these times, I am filled with an overpowering sense of awe and wonder at the scene

before me. It is not only the service and the church building itself that is important to my relationship with God, but those members of the church community who encourage and build me up. I do not know where I would be in my life without those members of the church community. A second means by which I experience God is through charity and service to others. Some of the most powerful experiences of my life have been those times when I am helping and giving to others.

A recent example of such an experience is my trip to Mexico with three members from my church. The four of us journeyed to Mexico City in order to meet with our companion church Cristo Rey and attempt to strengthen the relationships we had begun to form the previous summer. Our initial intentions were also to help the people there in any way we could. But one of the aspects of such a trip that I often forget is that after having given of my time, I often come away having gained so much from the very people I came to help. They welcomed the four of us into their homes, fed us their food, and included us in their trips to the cemeteries to participate in their "Day of the Dead" celebrations. We all returned from the trip with a sense of accomplishment in having created new plans for aiding our companions in the months to come and strengthening our bonds with the people there. However we also strengthened the relationships among ourselves and each of us and God. Experiences such as my Mexico trip bring me closer to God than ever and help me to realize where God fits into my life. Thoreau, on the other hand, felt that "there is no odor so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted" (66). He despised charity and exclaimed that if he "knew for certain that a man was coming to [his] houses with the conscious design of doing [him] good, [he] should run for [his] life" (67). This great difference of opinion between us leads me to the realization that there are several other needs that I have that are completely separate

from any of Thoreau's.

While there are several needs that I have that are completely independent from Thoreau, perhaps the most important to me are my relationships. While at Walden Pond, Thoreau did not consider relationships to be a true need. He once stated that he "never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude" (Abbey, 4). However, for myself, it is necessary that my life is full of relationships, for from relationships I receive love. Relationships with my family are essential to me. My family will always be there for me, no matter what turbulence and trials life throws my way. My whole family is very close and I do not know where I would be without their love, support, guidance and friendship. Friendship is another relationship that I must have in my life. I have friends who are like family to me. My friends build me up; they strengthen me and make me a better person. While I need my solitude at times, I find that I need these relationships in my life to help me feel fulfilled and happy. In contrast to myself, Thoreau found that "to be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating" (4). Thoreau also never felt the need to have a wife and family. For me, a husband and children is something that I want to eventually be a large part of my life. While my own family is not absolutely essential to a happy life, I believe that it is important to me leading a fulfilled life. It is through relationships that I grow and experience love, and love is essential to my survival.

There are several other needs that are essential to my survival in the world that we live in today. The most important of these is the need of a formal education. While in today's society a person could survive without a formal education, it is difficult to find a job that one loves without the degree. Granted, there are those who are perfectly happy in their lives and their jobs without a formal education, but, I find it necessary to obtain a formal education. I have the need for learn-

ing in my life which can be acquired through education. Thoreau, although he supported learning, was against the idea of a formal education and thought it a waste. Thoreau believed it important for men not become "the tools of their tools" (33), but to live life according to what makes you happy. In order for me to be "the keeper of herds" (50), instead of the other way around, it is necessary that I obtain a formal education.

The final need that I have is quite separate, and may at first appear a bit more trivial than my other needs: music is essential to my happiness. Music is a means to controlling my emotions. It helps to convey what I am feeling. I am hardly ever without music. When I am happy, there is always music playing to continue lifting my spirits. When I am in church, the beautiful music there helps to draw me closer to God. If I am depressed or angry, often, the only thing that can improve my mood is listening to my music in solitude. While I cannot play an instrument, I still have an incredible appreciation for and love of music. Even though it may be something that many people may find unnecessary, it is a crucial part of my life.

Thoreau explained, "some things are really necessities of life in some circles, the most helpless and diseased, which others are luxuries merely, and in others entirely unknown" (9). To me, the human race can be compared to a huge garden brimming with beautiful flowers. While all the plants are flowers, there is a full array of shapes, colors, and sizes present in the garden. Some may even require more focused care and attention than others. Like the flowers in the garden, I believe that everyone has basic needs that are similar, and even intangible needs that are alike. But because each person is unique, the more someone considers what is essential to his or her own life, the more he will discover that his or her needs are different from everyone else's.

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